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Table of Contents

	Page
List of Figures	iv
List of Tables	v
Preface	viii

Introduction	1
--------------	---

Overview of Alberta Families	4
------------------------------	---

Family Structure	1
Regional Variations	2
Alberta's Family Composition	3
Alberta's Family Composition by Region	4
Black British	5
Religious Affiliation of Alberta	6

Population and Immigration	10
----------------------------	----

Birth Rates	11
Age of the Adult Male	12
Immigration and Immigration	13
Immigration and Immigration	14
Immigration and Immigration	15
Immigration and Immigration	16
Immigration and Immigration	17
Immigration and Immigration	18
Immigration and Immigration	19
Immigration and Immigration	20
Immigration and Immigration	21
Immigration and Immigration	22
Immigration and Immigration	23
Immigration and Immigration	24
Immigration and Immigration	25
Immigration and Immigration	26
Immigration and Immigration	27
Immigration and Immigration	28
Immigration and Immigration	29
Immigration and Immigration	30
Immigration and Immigration	31
Immigration and Immigration	32
Immigration and Immigration	33
Immigration and Immigration	34
Immigration and Immigration	35
Immigration and Immigration	36
Immigration and Immigration	37
Immigration and Immigration	38
Immigration and Immigration	39
Immigration and Immigration	40
Immigration and Immigration	41
Immigration and Immigration	42
Immigration and Immigration	43
Immigration and Immigration	44
Immigration and Immigration	45
Immigration and Immigration	46
Immigration and Immigration	47
Immigration and Immigration	48
Immigration and Immigration	49
Immigration and Immigration	50
Immigration and Immigration	51
Immigration and Immigration	52
Immigration and Immigration	53
Immigration and Immigration	54
Immigration and Immigration	55
Immigration and Immigration	56
Immigration and Immigration	57
Immigration and Immigration	58
Immigration and Immigration	59
Immigration and Immigration	60
Immigration and Immigration	61
Immigration and Immigration	62
Immigration and Immigration	63
Immigration and Immigration	64
Immigration and Immigration	65
Immigration and Immigration	66
Immigration and Immigration	67
Immigration and Immigration	68
Immigration and Immigration	69
Immigration and Immigration	70
Immigration and Immigration	71
Immigration and Immigration	72
Immigration and Immigration	73
Immigration and Immigration	74
Immigration and Immigration	75
Immigration and Immigration	76
Immigration and Immigration	77
Immigration and Immigration	78
Immigration and Immigration	79
Immigration and Immigration	80
Immigration and Immigration	81
Immigration and Immigration	82
Immigration and Immigration	83
Immigration and Immigration	84
Immigration and Immigration	85
Immigration and Immigration	86
Immigration and Immigration	87
Immigration and Immigration	88
Immigration and Immigration	89
Immigration and Immigration	90
Immigration and Immigration	91
Immigration and Immigration	92
Immigration and Immigration	93
Immigration and Immigration	94
Immigration and Immigration	95
Immigration and Immigration	96
Immigration and Immigration	97
Immigration and Immigration	98
Immigration and Immigration	99
Immigration and Immigration	100

Immigration and Immigration	101
-----------------------------	-----

Immigration and Immigration	102
-----------------------------	-----

Immigration and Immigration	103
-----------------------------	-----

Immigration and Immigration	104
-----------------------------	-----

Immigration and Immigration	105
-----------------------------	-----

Immigration and Immigration	106
-----------------------------	-----

Immigration and Immigration	107
-----------------------------	-----

Immigration and Immigration	108
-----------------------------	-----

Immigration and Immigration	109
-----------------------------	-----

Immigration and Immigration	110
-----------------------------	-----

Immigration and Immigration	111
-----------------------------	-----

Immigration and Immigration	112
-----------------------------	-----

Immigration and Immigration	113
-----------------------------	-----

Immigration and Immigration	114
-----------------------------	-----

Immigration and Immigration	115
-----------------------------	-----

Alberta Families Today

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Table of Contents

Page

List of Figures	iv
List of Tables	vii
Preface	viii
Introduction	1
Overview of Alberta Families	4
Family Structure	3
Regional Variations	5
Alberta's Farm Families	7
Alberta's Native Families	9
Ethnic Origin	10
Religious Affiliations of Albertans	15
Population Trends	16
Falling Birth Rates	16
Aging of the Baby Boom Generation	17
Increasing Life Expectancy	18
Aging of the Population	18
Slowing of Population Growth	19
Immigration, Population Growth, and Economic Well-Being	19
Marriage	20
Marital Status at Different Ages	21
Marital Stability	24
Trends in Marriage	25
Common-Law Couples	28
Common-Law Families	30
Divorce	31
Reasons for Divorce	33
Children of Divorce	34
Custody of Children	35

Parenting	36
Most Albertans Do Have Children	37
Family Size	38
Births	40
Abortions	47
Who is Raising Alberta's Children?	49
How Many of These Families are Nuclear Families?	49
Lone Parent Families	50
 Family Responsibilities	 52
Housework	53
Men are More Involved in Household Tasks	54
Most are Satisfied With the Way Housework is Shared	55
Outside Maintenance	56
Child Rearing	57
More Involvement in Child Care	61
Use of Child Care	62
Maintaining Contact With Relatives	63
Financial Decisions	64
 Launching from the Nest	 65
More Albertans are Living Alone	65
Young Adults Leaving Home at Younger Ages	66
Reasons for Leaving Home Changing	67
Trend Reversing: More Young Adults May be Staying Home	68
 Family Work Patterns	 70
Two Earner Families	71
Couples and Work	72
Working Mothers in the Labour Force	73
Work Settings of Men and Women	76
Employment and Education	77

Family Income	78
Family Income in Alberta	78
Family Income in 1990	79
Family Income Changes, 1980-1990	79
Income of Lone Parent Families	80
Income of Elderly Families	80
Summary of Changes in Family Income	80
Average Income of Alberta Families Compared to All Canadian Families	81
Home Ownership	82
Low Income in Alberta	83
More Low Income Families With Children	85
More Unattached Persons Below the Low Income Measure	85
Fewer Elderly Low Income Families	85
How Albertans Spend Their Income	86
Summary	87
Bibliography	88
Appendix A - Data Base Descriptions	94
Appendix B - Definitions	96
Appendix C - Subcommittee on Demographic Trends and Family Issues	100

List of Figures

	Page
Figure 1 - What is Important in Life?	1
Figure 2 - Families in Alberta - 1990	4
Figure 3 - Alberta's Farm Population - 1986	7
Figure 4 - Alberta's Native Population - 1986	9
Figure 5 - Ethnic Origins of Albertans Who Have One Ethnic Origin	10
Figure 6 - Ethnic Origins of Albertans Who Have Multiple Ethnic Origins	11
Figure 7 - Albertans Born Outside of Canada: By Place of Birth	13
Figure 8 - Immigrants to Alberta - 1990	14
Figure 9 - Religious Affiliation of Albertans - 1990	15
Figure 10 - Alberta Population by Age Groups - 1986 to 2016	17
Figure 11 - Marital Status at Different Ages: Single Men and Women	21
Figure 12 - Marital Status at Different Ages: Men	22
Figure 13 - Marital Status at Different Ages: Women	23
Figure 14 - Current State of Alberta Marriages	24
Figure 15 - Average Age of Men and Women at First Marriage in Alberta	25
Figure 16 - Average Age at Marriage - Including Those Entering First or Subsequent Marriages	26
Figure 17 - Marital Status at Marriage - 1975 to 1990	27
Figure 18 - Common-Law Couples - Outcome: All Albertans Who Ever Lived Common-Law	28
Figure 19 - Men and Women Living Common-Law at Different Ages	30
Figure 20 - Divorce Rates in Alberta and Canada - 1979 to 1989	31
Figure 21 - Reasons for Divorce in Alberta and Canada - 1989	33

List of Tables

Page

Figure 22 - Number of Dependent Children Affected by Divorce - 1989	34
Figure 23 - Children of Divorce in Alberta: Custody Awards in 1989	35
Figure 24 - Satisfaction With Family Members	36
Figure 25 - Family Size and Children Living at Home	38
Figure 26 - Expected Births Per Woman 15 to 49: Fertility Projections, Alberta - 1956-2016	39
Figure 27 - Family Size - First and Later Children - 1975 to 1990	40
Figure 28 - Age of Mothers - 1975 to 1990	41
Figure 29 - Age of Fathers - 1985 to 1990	42
Figure 30 - Births to Unmarried Parents - 1975 to 1990	43
Figure 31 - Age of Mothers - 1975 to 1990	44
Figure 32 - Age of Fathers - 1985 to 1990	45
Figure 33 - Teen Pregnancy in Alberta - 1975 to 1990	46
Figure 34 - Rates of Abortions Reported in Alberta and Canada, 1971-1989	47
Figure 35 - Age of Women - Reported Abortions - Alberta, 1989	48
Figure 36 - Marital Status of Parents Living With Their Children 18 and Under	49
Figure 37 - Male and Female Lone Parent Families - Alberta, 1971-1986	50
Figure 38 - Who Usually Does the Household Chores? Alberta - 1989	53
Figure 39 - Involvement in Household Tasks in the Last 2 or 3 Years	54
Figure 40 - Satisfaction With the Way Housework is Shared	55
Figure 41 - Household Chores - How Much Outside Maintenance Do They Do?	56
Figure 42 - Parents and Their Children: How Often Do They Laugh Together?	57
Figure 43 - Parents and Their Children: How Often Do They Discuss Important Things? .	58
Figure 44 - Parents and Their Children: Who Takes Care of Sick Children?	58
Figure 45 - Parents and Their Children: Who Helps Children With School Work?	59

Page

Figure 46 - Parents and Their Children: Who Finds Babysitters?	60
Figure 47 - Involvement in Childcare in the Last 2 or 3 Years	61
Figure 48 - Mothers of Preschoolers: Who is Using Childcare?	62
Figure 49 - Contact With Relatives: Who Maintains It?	63
Figure 50 - Major Financial Decisions: Who Makes Them?	64
Figure 51 - Households With Persons Living Alone - Alberta and Canada, 1971-1986	65
Figure 52 - Children 15+ Living in Their Parents' Homes	69
Figure 53 - The Changing Labour Force Patterns of Alberta Families, 1981-1990	71
Figure 54 - Couples and Work	72
Figure 55 - Alberta Families With Children: Mothers' Labour Force Activity	73
Figure 56 - Lone Parent and Two Parent Families: Percent of Women in the Labour Force	74
Figure 57 - Lone Parent and Two Parent Families: Percent of Women Working Full Time	75
Figure 58 - Work Setting of Men and Women in Alberta, 1990	76
Figure 59 - Home Ownership	82
Figure 60 - Percent of Families and Single Persons With Low Incomes in Alberta	83

List of Tables

	Page
Table 1 - Regional Variation by Census Division	6
Table 2 - Top Ten Single Ethnic Origins, Alberta, 1986	12
Table 3 - Percent of Albertans Married at Different Ages	20
Table 4 - Currently Married Albertans Who Lived in a Common-Law Relationship With Their Spouse Before Marriage	29
Table 5 - Age Specific Divorce Rates Per 100 Married Albertans	32
Table 6 - Children Born to Albertans of Different Ages - 1990	37
Table 7 - Age of Leaving Their Parents' Home - Alberta, 1990	66
Table 8 - Main Reason for Moving Out of Parents' Home	67
Table 9 - Characteristics of Young Unmarried Adults 20-29 Living in Their Parents' Home, and Living Alone	68
Table 10 - Labour Force Participation Rates by Level of Education - Alberta, 1990	77
Table 11 - Unemployment Rates by Level of Education - Alberta, 1990	77
Table 12 - Family Income - Alberta, 1981 to 1990	78
Table 13 - Average Income of Families	81
Table 14 - Low Income - Alberta, 1981 to 1990	84
Table 15 - 1990 Average Household Expenditures	86
Table 16 - Low Income Measures by Family Type, 1981 to 1990	99
Table 17 - The Real Value of the Low Income Measure in 1990 Dollars	99

Preface

The Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families was established in 1990 to advise the government on how its policies, programs, and services may impact family life in Alberta.

This profile has been developed by the Premier's Council to monitor changes and continuities in family life in Alberta, to track emerging trends, and to create an awareness of the issues that affect families.

A consistent profile of Alberta families is needed for planning and policy development across government, for use by community planners and organizers, as well as to stimulate public discussion. A profile of Alberta families is also required by the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families to support their role of advising the government on the impact of its legislation, policies, and programs on Alberta's families.

This profile brings together data from several sources to provide a focus on Alberta families and to highlight some of the more significant demographic trends.

Information has been gathered from the Alberta Vital Statistics Registries of births and marriages, and a wide variety of Statistics Canada publications. Special tabulations were generated from the Statistics Canada 1990 General Social Survey, Family and Friends Micro Data File, and the 1989 University of Alberta Population Research Laboratory, All Alberta Survey and Edmonton Area Survey data. Details on these data files are included in Appendix A.

As usual, with comparisons across data sources, definitions do vary, and in some cases the definitions used can mask the changing profile of family life, such as when common-law couples with children are included as either married couple families, or single parent families. Another problem is the specification of dependent children in the family - some definitions may include children of any age, even adults over 30, as long as they have never married; others focus on children under 16, 18, or 25. Throughout the document, we have, wherever possible, followed the Statistics Canada definitions that are included in Appendix B, and specified the definition used, whenever it varies from these.

The focus of this profile is on the demographic characteristics of Alberta families. The trends and current characteristics in terms of marriage, common-law relationships, divorce, parenthood, unmarried parents, family size, farm families, cultural diversity, family work patterns, and family income patterns are discussed in this report.

The purpose of *Alberta Families Today* is to present a demographic overview of families; it does not focus on such social problems as family violence, crime, or suicide, or on the current program statistics about investigations of child abuse or the number of families receiving supports for independence. Subsequent publications will give attention to these issues.

Alberta Families Today focuses on the continuities in family life, as well as changing family characteristics. It has been developed to assist legislators, policy makers, and members of the community in analyzing the characteristics of family life in Alberta, and to encourage a wide ranging discussion of issues that are important to Alberta families.

The Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families wishes to acknowledge the assistance of the members of the Subcommittee on Demographic Trends and Social Issues, who steered the development of this project, and provided input on earlier drafts of the document; to the staff of the Alberta Bureau of Statistics and Statistics Canada who assisted in data access and analysis; and to Sherry Thompson, consultant, for her research, analysis and writing services.

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Introduction

"Whatever the time in history, and whatever the challenges they face, families remain the foundation of society. If we lose sight of the family as our greatest natural resource then our society is weakened."

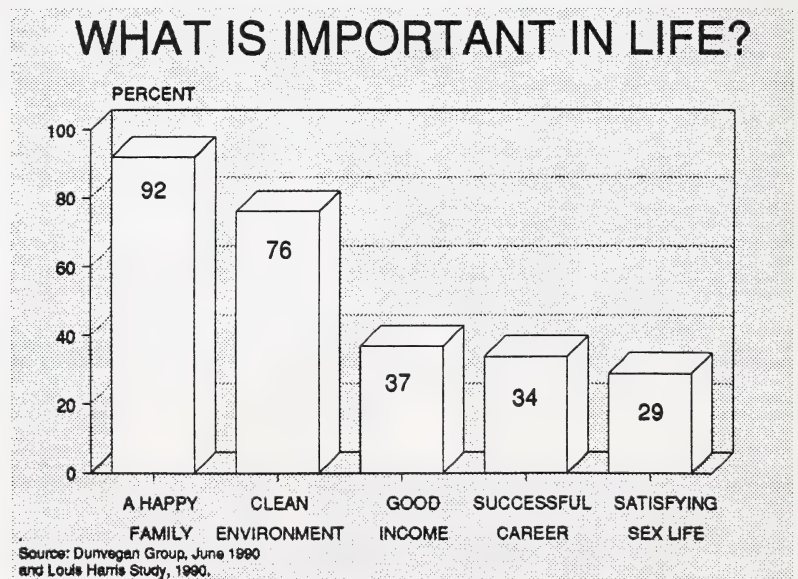
- The Vanier Institute of the Family, *Canadian Families*, 1991⁸

The family in Alberta, while undergoing significant change, continues to be the source of greatest satisfaction for Albertans and is crucial to our sense of what matters in life.

When Albertans are asked what is important in life, the vast majority (over 92%) state that a 'happy family life' is important - more than a clean environment, a good income, or a successful career²².

Figure 1

92% of Albertans think that a happy family life is **essential** to their lives.



Most Albertans still express a strong commitment to family life. Most young Albertans plan to marry and raise children. Most Albertans do marry and have children, and most marriages do last a lifetime. Most Albertans rely on their spouse or family members for support when they are feeling down or depressed and most are very satisfied with their immediate families. The vast majority of Albertans, both men and women, state that their family is more important to them than their job.

The core meanings of family life, in terms of caring, sharing, and providing support for each other, have not changed. What has changed for many is the structure of family life, the age at which people begin and end family life transitions, and a changing balance between work and family life.

This report begins with a look at a cross-section of Alberta families, then analyzes some of the larger demographic trends affecting families and focuses on family life transitions, family work patterns and family income.

Overview of Alberta Families

"The family is an institution of major importance in Canadian society. It reflects the complex components of our intellectual and cultural traditions, structures many of the major events in our lives, and will ultimately play a major part in determining the nature of our society in the future."

- Jean E. Veevers, *Continuity and Change in Marriage and Family*, 1991³⁴

A cross section of Alberta's families, in terms of family structure, ethnic origin, place of birth, regional variations, farm families, Native families and religious affiliation is addressed in this section of the report.

Family Structure*

There were nearly 2.5 million people in Alberta in 1990, and over 660,000 families⁴²⁹. Over 81% of Albertans (over 2 million people) live in families. The remainder, 19%, either live alone, or share their household with unrelated people, such as roommates or boarders. Those who live alone may be very involved in family life, even though they live apart from other family members.

Twelve percent of all families are elderly families, with one or both members being 65 years old or over. Three quarters of Alberta's elderly families are couples only, and one quarter include an elderly head of household and other family members.

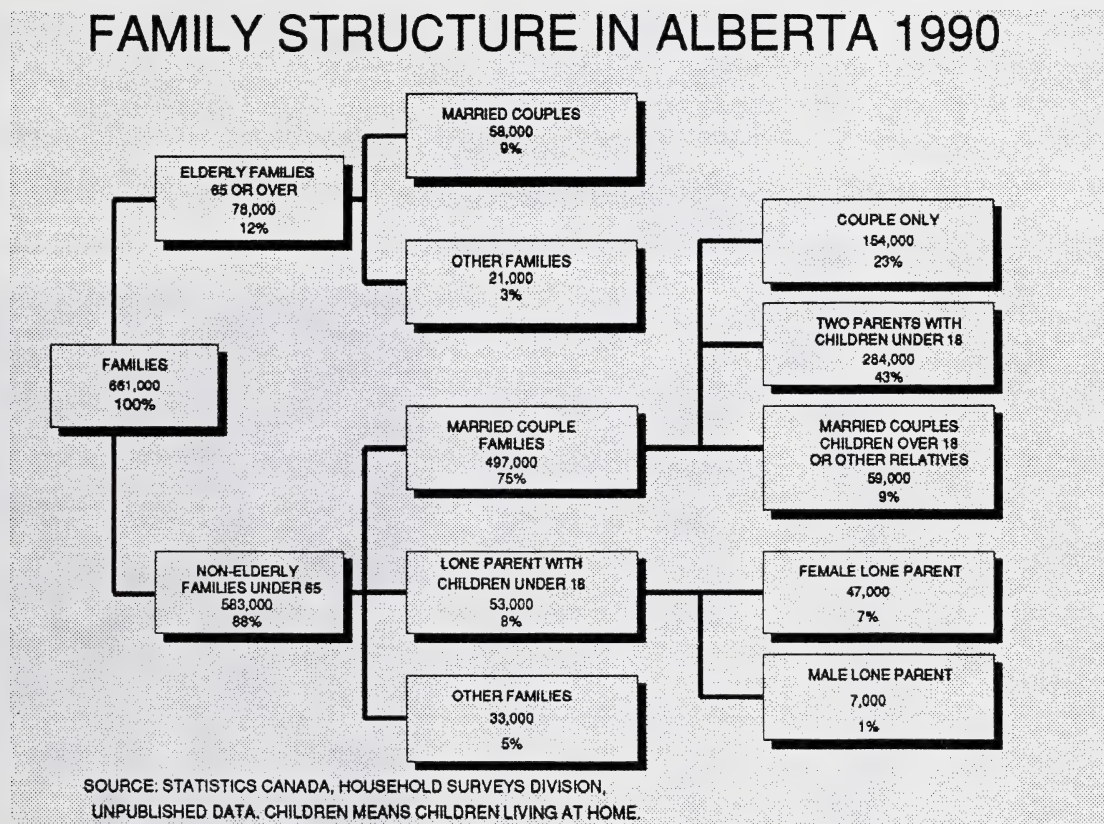
Married couple families make up the majority of non-elderly families (75%). Two parent families with children under 18 still make up 43% of all families. Married couple families with children over 18 or with other relatives living at home, represent 9%; and married couples with no children, or no children at home, make up 23% of families. Married couple families in this data include common-law couples; remarried families where one or both of the spouses have had two or more marriages; and blended families, where one or both of the spouses had children before marriage or in previous marriages.

There are about 53,000 lone parent families with children under 18 in Alberta (1990). Lone parent families represent 8% of all families, and nearly 16% of families with children under 18. One in eight lone parent families is headed by a man, and 7 out of 8 are headed by women.

Five percent of families are classified as "other families," which include lone parent families with children over 18, and groups of siblings or other related people living together.

* This data refers to economic families, defined by Statistics Canada as two or more people related to each other by blood, marriage, or adoption, sharing one household. Families are classified as elderly or non-elderly based on the age of the person who was designated as head of the family by the family member who was interviewed.

Figure 2



NOTE: 'children under 18' means that there is at least one unmarried child under 18 living at home. Children over 18 and/or other relatives may also be present.

'children over 18' means that there are no unmarried children under 18, but that children 18 and over of any marital status may be present.

'other families (elderly)' refers to an elderly person (65 and over) with or without a spouse, who has other relatives such as adult children or siblings living at home.

'other families (non-elderly)' refers to lone parents living with adult children over 18, groups of siblings, or other related people living together.

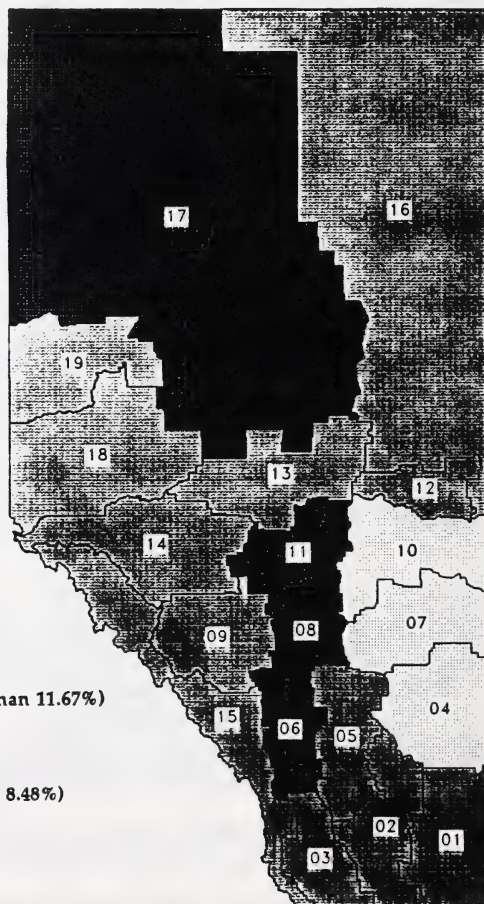
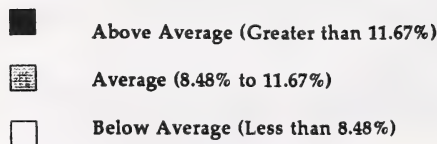
Regional Variations

Many of the changes in family life that are discussed in this report apply more in the urban centres of Alberta than in the rural areas. In general, rural Alberta has more children, larger families, and fewer lone parent families than urban centres³. In addition, there are variations across regions of the province.

The percentage of the population who are children ranges from 24% in the Canmore census division to nearly 39% in the Slave Lake census division. The percentage of seniors in the census division ranges from 3% in Fort McMurray to nearly 16% in Camrose. Lone parent families were the highest proportion of all families in Edmonton in 1986 (13%) and the lowest in Hanna (7%). Stettler and Canmore also have a lower percentage of single parent families than the rest of the province has, as shown in the map below.

PROPORTION OF
SINGLE PARENT
FAMILIES IN ALBERTA
BY
CENSUS DIVISION
(1986)

Single Parent Families
as a Proportion (%) of the
Total Number of Families



(Note: Average = Mean for all CD's +/- one Standard Deviation)

The median income of husband-wife families in 1989, was highest at \$66,400 in the Fort McMurray census division. The lowest median income (\$34,300) for husband-wife families was in the Cardston census division. Overall, the median income for husband-wife families in Alberta was \$46,400 in 1989^{2a}.

Table 1

Regional Variation by Census Division

Census Division	Percent Children ¹ (1991)	Percent Seniors ¹ (1991)	Lone Parent Families as a Percent of All Families ² (1986)	Median Total Income of Husband Wife Families ³ (1989)
(1) Medicine Hat	27.5	12.9	9.79	41,800
(2) Lethbridge	28.9	12.1	10.81	41,300
(3) Cardston	33.3	12.5	10.36	34,300
(4) Hanna	28.8	13.7	7.07	38,500
(5) Drumheller	30.2	12.5	9.47	37,000
(6) Calgary	26.2	8.2	12.29	50,400
(7) Stettler	28.9	14.5	7.34	38,100
(8) Red Deer	28.9	10.2	11.71	41,200
(9) Rocky Mountain House	31.6	9.0	9.22	36,800
(10) Camrose	27.5	15.8	8.44	37,100
(11) Edmonton	27.4	8.7	13.11	48,300
(12) Bonnyville	35.1	9.5	9.78	39,000
(13) Westlock	29.0	12.1	9.29	35,100
(14) Hinton	31.4	6.8	9.68	47,900
(15) Canmore	24.1	8.2	9.59	47,600
(16) Fort McMurray	34.0	3.0	11.28	66,400
(17) Slave Lake	38.7	5.3	12.20	35,900
(18) Grande Cache	34.4	4.3	9.37	45,200
(19) Grand Prairie	31.8	7.7	10.69	43,700
Average	30.4	9.8	10.07	46,400
Lowest Census Division	24.1 (Canmore)	3.0 (Ft.McMurray)	7.07 (Hanna)	34,300 (Cardston)
Highest Census Division	38.7 (Slave Lake)	15.8 (Camrose)	13.11 (Edmonton)	66,400 (Ft. McMurray)

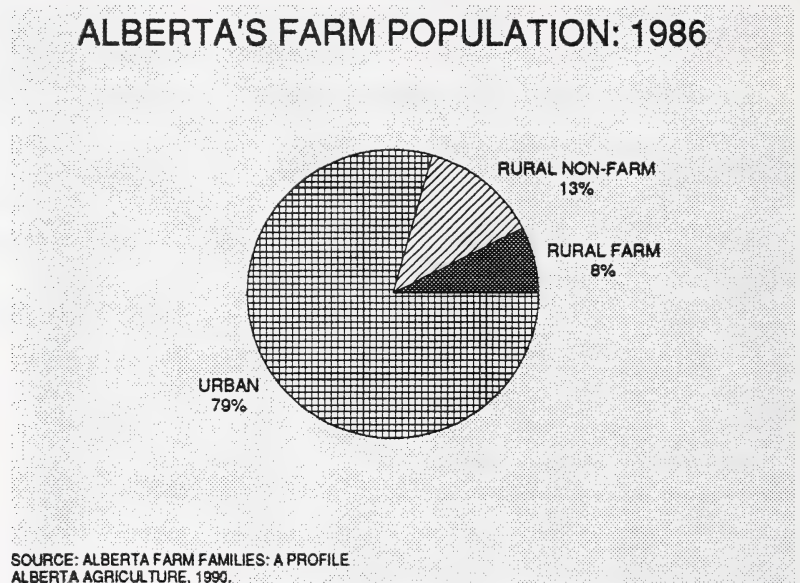
Sources:

1. Alberta Bureau of Statistics, 1991/06/01.
2. Statistics Canada, 1986 Canada Census, prepared by Alberta Bureau of Statistics, 1992/02/07.
3. Statistics Canada, Husband Wife Family Data, 1989 by Census Divisions.

Alberta's Farm Families'

The number of farm families in Alberta is declining. In 1986, nearly 8% of Alberta's population lived on farms. In the 10 years between 1976 and 1986, Alberta's farm population declined by over 16%, from 219,302 to 183,380 people. The average size of farms has slowly increased, changing from 817 acres in 1976 to 884 acres in 1986. Although there are fewer farms, it is the number of medium-sized farms that are decreasing; both small farms (less than 64 acres) and large farms (greater than 1,600 acres) are increasing in numbers.

Figure 3



Farm families are more likely than urban families to have both husband and wife present (95% versus 87%), to have children at home (67% versus 54%), and to have lone parent families headed by men (43% of lone parent families versus 15% of urban lone parent families) (1986).

* This information is extracted from *Alberta Farm Families: A Profile*, published by Alberta Agriculture, 1990⁴.

Ninety-four percent of all persons living on farms live with a family, and there are more people per household on farms than in Alberta as a whole. More older children (over 18) are still living with their families on farms and over 81% of the seniors (65+) living on the farm are living with family members, as compared to 60% of the seniors in urban areas.

About 65% of all farm women are in the labour force. Of those, 38% are working in farming occupations and 62% in non-farm occupations. Men living on farms are most often farming (64%), but 36% are involved in non-farm occupations. Operators of small farms rely more on off-farm income than operators of larger farms.

Alberta's Native Families'

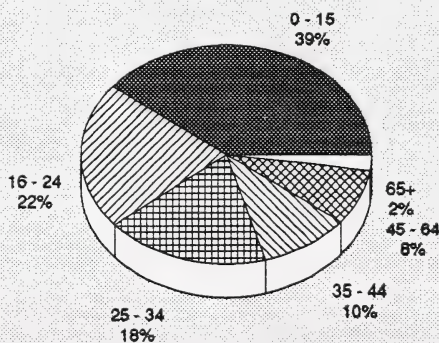
Alberta's Native population is growing. In 1981, 3.2% of Albertans were of Native descent and in 1991, it is estimated that 5% of Albertans, over 125,000 people, are of Native descent. It is also estimated, based on 1986 census data, that about 43% of Alberta's Native population are Indian, nearly 57% Metis, and 0.3% Inuit.

About one third of the registered Indian people in Alberta live off-reserve and two thirds live on-reserve. Between 1986 and 1989, the off-reserve Native Indian population grew at a rate of about 9% a year and the on-reserve population by a rate of about 2% a year, as compared to the total Alberta population growth of less than 1% a year over the same period. About 92% of the Alberta Metis population lives off-settlement.

Alberta's Native population is much younger than the population as a whole, with over 39% of the Native population under 16 years old and less than 3% seniors over 65, as compared to the Alberta rate of 24% children and 8% seniors in 1986.

Figure 4

ALBERTA'S NATIVE POPULATION BY AGE GROUPS - 1986



SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA 1986 CENSUS
DATA, ENUMERATED AREAS, FROM NATIVE
SERVICES.

* This data is based on the 1986 Statistics Canada Census data, for areas that were enumerated. Some reserves declined to participate in the 1986 census (about 9,000 people in Alberta), so the data must be interpreted with caution. The source of this data is Native Advisory Services, Alberta Solicitor General.

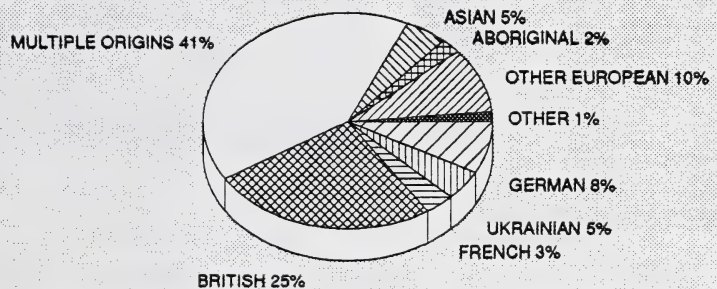
Ethnic Origin

Alberta was settled by immigrants, with each successive wave of immigration making its contribution to Alberta's culture and community life. Originally, most immigrants came from Europe, particularly from Britain.

In the 1986 census, about 59% of Albertans stated that they had one ethnic origin. Of these, the largest groups are of British (25%), German (8%), Ukrainian (5%), French (3%) or other European (10%) ethnic origins. The total of all of these European single origins is 51% of Albertans. About 2% are of Aboriginal origin, including Indian, Metis, and Inuit. About 6% come from Asian, middle eastern or other ethnic origins⁴⁸.

Figure 5

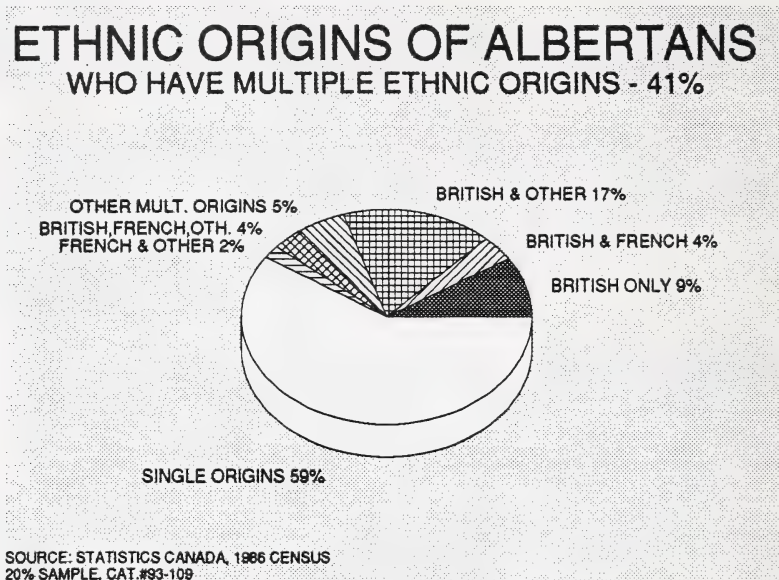
ETHNIC ORIGINS OF ALBERTANS WHO HAVE ONE ETHNIC ORIGIN - 59%



SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA, 1986 CENSUS
20% SAMPLE, CAT.# 93-106

Of the 41% of Albertans who reported multiple ethnic origins, 35.3% reported some combination of British and/or French and other ethnic origins. About 5.3% reported multiple ethnic origins that do not include British or French.

Figure 6



NOTE: Please refer to notes with Table 2 on page 12.

The top ten single ethnic origin groups in Alberta, and the number of people in each ethnic origin group, are presented in the table below.

Table 2

**Top Ten Single Ethnic Origins
Alberta, 1986**

	No.	%
Total	2,340,265	100.0
Total single origins	1,389,930	59
Top ten single groups		
1. British ¹	592,345	25.3
2. German	182,870	7.8
3. Ukrainian	106,760	4.6
4. French ²	77,585	3.3
5. Dutch (Netherlands)	55,920	2.4
6. Aboriginal ⁵	51,670	2.2
7. Chinese	49,210	2.1
8. Scandinavian ³	46,525	2.0
9. South Asian ⁴	30,090	1.3
10. Polish	28,500	1.2
Other single origins	168,455	7.2
Total multiple origins⁶	950,335	41
British only ⁷	213,130	9.1
French only ⁸	105	0.0
British and French	90,315	3.9
British and/or French and other ⁹	522,415	22.3
Other multiple origins	124,365	5.3

NOTE: The figures for 1986 exclude the population on incompletely enumerated Indian reserves and Indian settlements. For Alberta the excluded population is estimated at about 9,000 people. This chart is based on 20% sample data.

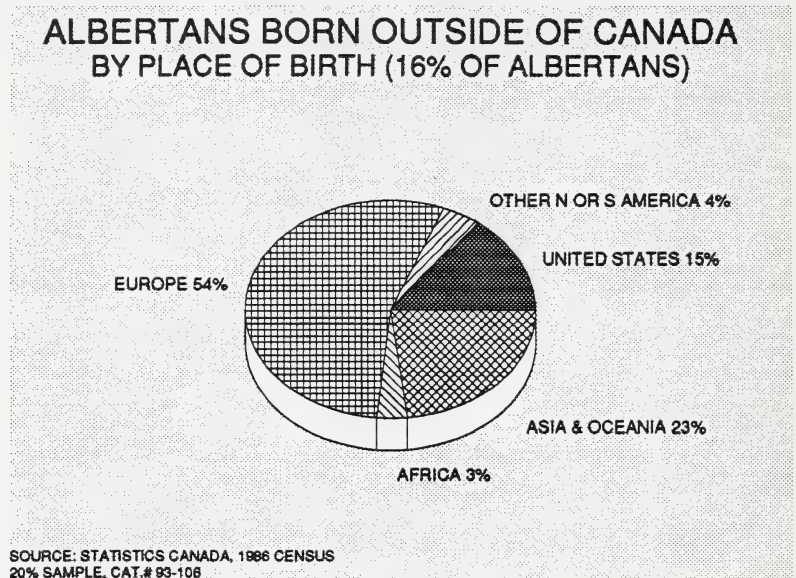
n.i.e. = not included elsewhere

1. Includes the single origins of English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh, British, n.i.e. and Other British.
2. Includes the single origins of French, Acadian, French Canadian and Québécois.
3. Includes the single origins of Danish, Icelandic, Norwegian, Swedish and Scandinavian, n.i.e.
4. Includes the single origins of Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi, Singhalese, Tamil, Bangladeshi, n.i.e., East Indian, n.i.e., Pakistani, n.i.e. and Sri Lankan, n.i.e.
5. Includes the single origins of Inuit, Metis and North American Indian.
6. Includes persons who report more than one ethnic origin.
7. The British only category includes persons who report more than one of the following origins: English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh, British n.i.e., and Other British.
8. The French only category includes persons who report more than one of the following origins: French, Acadian, Franco-Manitoban, Franco-Ontarian, French Canadian and Québécois.
9. Total British, French and Other includes British and Other, French and Other, and British, French and Other.

Albertans Born Outside of Canada

According to the 1986 census data, about 16% of Albertans are born outside of Canada. Of that 16%, the majority were born in Europe (54%). About 23% were born in Asia or Oceania. About 15% were born in the United States. Small numbers were born elsewhere in North or South America (4%) or in Africa (3%).⁴⁸

Figure 7

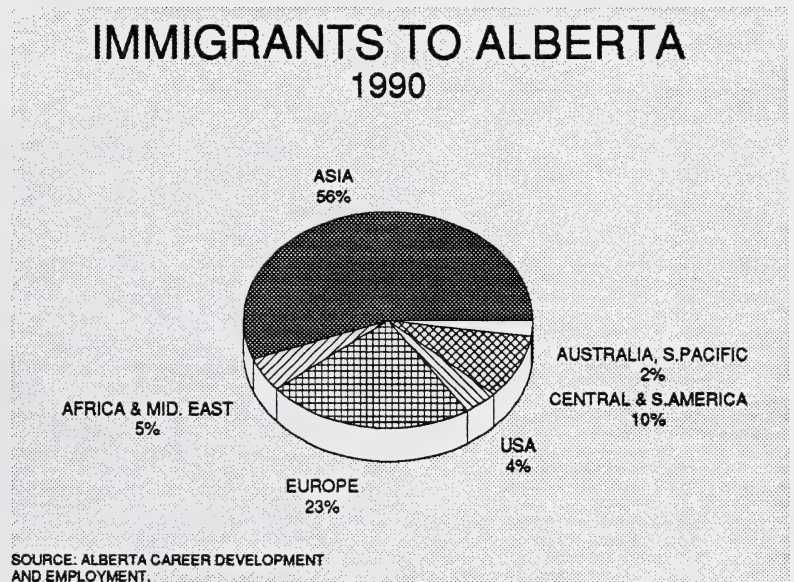


The majority of Albertans born outside of Canada live in Edmonton and Calgary. Both cities are among the 10 most culturally diverse cities in Canada, both in terms of the proportion of people born outside of Canada⁴⁹ and in terms of the proportion of visible minorities (Edmonton 9.3%, Calgary 10.9%)⁵⁰.

Immigrants to Alberta

In 1990, there were 18,908 immigrants to Alberta, with about 56% coming from Asia, 10% from Central and South America and 5% from Africa and the Middle East. Europe, at 23%, is still a significant source of immigrants. Over half of the recent immigrants speak neither English nor French (1990).⁷

Figure 8



Most new immigrants to Alberta (86.5%) choose to live in Edmonton or Calgary. Only 8% choose to live in rural Alberta.

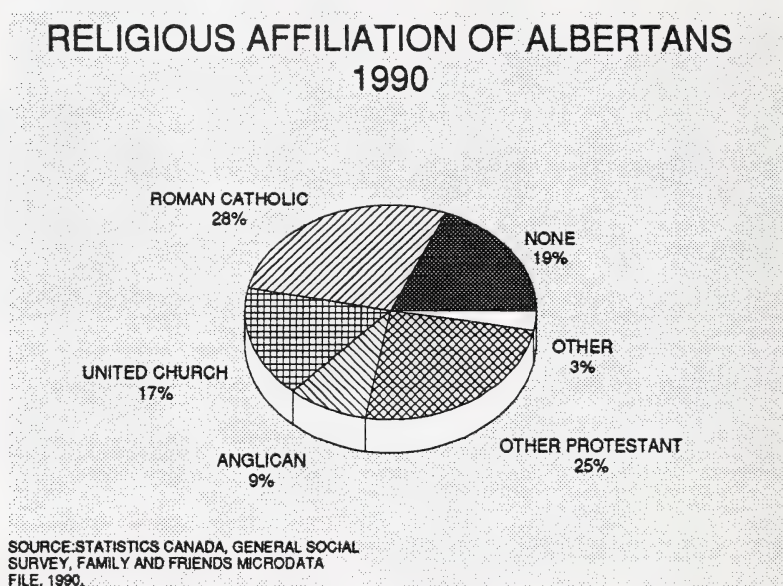
Albertans are challenged to understand and accept different family choices and family cultures from a more diverse range of countries than ever before. However, it is primarily the urban schools and agencies that are facing the challenges of responding to the social, educational, and language needs of new arrivals⁵⁵. While Alberta's urban centres continue to become more culturally diverse, changes in rural areas are much less pronounced.

Religious Affiliations of Albertans

Another way to describe Albertans is by their choice of religious affiliation. Nineteen percent of Albertans report that they have no religion. The remainder (81%) report involvement in some religion. The largest group are Protestant (51%), with United Church (17%), and Anglican (9%) reported most often. Twenty eight percent of Albertans are Roman Catholic.

About 3% of Albertans choose other religions, including Judaism, Eastern Orthodox, and Islam.

Figure 9



Population Trends

"The joint action of declining fertility and mortality determines, for example, the number of years we spend as parents and as children, the likelihood of experiencing family roles and role transitions, and the ages at which important familial role changes happen. Thus, the effects of jointly declining fertility and mortality have an important influence on the intergenerational context of family life."

- Ellen M. Gee, *Demographic Change and Intergenerational Relations in Canadian Families: Findings and Social Policy Implications*, 1990¹²

The changing age and demographic structure of Alberta society will have far reaching effects on family life. These changes include the tendency of families to have fewer children, the aging of the "baby boom" generation, increasing life expectancy, aging of the population, and the slowing of population growth. Overall, the Alberta of the future will have fewer children, smaller families, more seniors, and will be more ethnically diverse, especially in the larger cities.

Falling Birth Rates

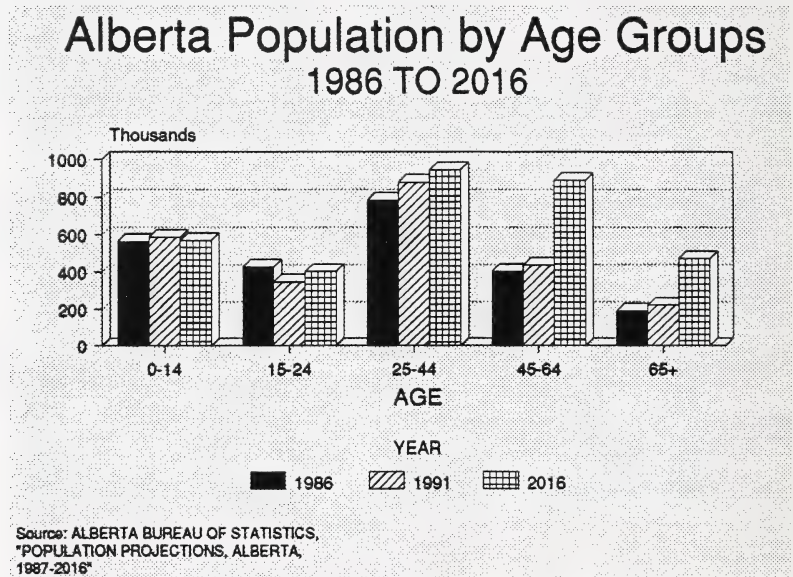
Over the last century, women in Alberta, as is the case in most industrialized countries, have been having fewer children. At present levels, there are not enough children being born for each generation to replace itself^{23,29}.

Fewer children implies smaller family size, fewer family members to help care for children or the aged, fewer years caring for small children, and more years spent by spouses in "empty nest" couples¹².

Aging of the Baby Boom Generation

The exception to the trend of dropping birth rates is the large "baby-boom" generation, born between 1947 and 1966. The baby-boom generation is now 25 to 45 years old, with the largest group being 32 years old. As the population bulge of this large generation moves beyond the prime childbearing ages, it is expected to further reduce the birthrate. There will be fewer women in the prime childbearing age range and fewer young families. There will be an increasing number of older families and "empty-nest" families, where the children have grown up and left home. The chart below shows the dramatic increases that are expected in the next 25 years, in the number of Albertans over 45 and over 65 years old. Both groups are expected to double in size in the next quarter century, while the number of children will decrease slightly⁹.

Figure 10



Increasing Life Expectancy

People are living longer. The life expectancy of Albertans is higher than the Canadian average. Life expectancy is expected to increase - for men, from 74.4 years in 1991 to 78.5 in 2016; and, for women, from 81.1 in 1991 to 83.7 in 2016. As Albertans live longer, it is expected that 6% of the population will be over 75 in 2016 and that the number of seniors over 85 will triple by 2016⁹.

Increasing life expectancy implies that people today have more surviving parents, grandparents, and even greatgrandparents than previous generations. However, there are fewer family members in today's smaller families to help provide support for these seniors. In addition, more of the usual providers of care, women, are involved in the labour force and are less able to provide care than they were in the past¹⁰.

Women, on average, outlive men by 6 or 7 years and usually marry men about two years older than themselves. Therefore, there is a larger proportion of elderly women than elderly men who are widowed. In recent years, the elderly have been increasingly living alone¹¹. Since more women than men outlive their spouses, it is usually older women who are living alone. The risk of low income that is associated with being elderly, female, and living alone, is currently a concern and may continue to be of concern in the future^{12,20}.

Aging of the Population

As a consequence of Albertans having fewer children and people living longer, the average age of the population is increasing. However, it is increasing from a young base. Alberta currently has one of the youngest median ages in Canada (31.3 years)¹⁰. Only Newfoundland, the Yukon, and the Northwest Territories have younger populations. Alberta also has the smallest proportion of seniors over 65 and over 85 in Canada, except for the Yukon and the Northwest Territories¹.

An aging population means that a higher proportion of the population may be relying on pensions and savings for income, and that there may be proportionally fewer people in the prime working years in the future.

Slowing of Population Growth

Alberta's population grew by 55% between 1971 and 1990, and by 2% between January 1990 and January 1991⁴. The rate of Alberta's population growth is expected to slow to approximately 1% a year until 2026, and then it is expected that the population may begin a gradual decline. This change from a rapidly growing population to a stable or decreasing population is caused by two of the same factors that influence population aging - families having fewer children and people living longer. Population growth is also influenced by the number of people moving to Alberta from other provinces and by the number of people immigrating to Alberta from other countries.

Alberta's population has been dramatically affected in the past by changes in both interprovincial and international migration. There were years in the late 1960's when over 50,000 people a year moved to Alberta from other Canadian provinces, and years in the 1980's when Alberta lost more population to other provinces than it gained. The changes in interprovincial migration are largely due to changing economic conditions.

Immigration, Population Growth, and Economic Well-Being

There have been suggestions that increasing the rate of international immigration could help to counteract population aging or to increase the growth of the population. However, studies by the Canadian Demographic Review suggest that only an increase in the number of children that Albertans have would make a long term impact on population growth and population aging. The reason suggested is that immigrant families, over time, reflect the patterns of childbearing of their chosen country. The Review also states that it is not so much the rate of population growth, either through birth or immigration, that affects Canadians' economic well-being, but it is the skills and effective economic participation of the population that is more important¹¹.

Marriage

"For the vast majority of people, marriage is probably the most important contract they will ever sign during the course of their lives."

- Margrit Eichler, *Families in Canada Today*, 1988¹⁹

In all societies, adults typically marry²⁰ and Albertans are no exception. Marriage is very important in the lives of the majority of people. Most Edmonton area residents (over 88%) agree with the statement that their relationship with their spouse is more important to them than anything else in their lives¹⁶. Similarly, the General Social Survey found that most Albertans who are currently married (over 80%) report that they are very satisfied with their spouse. An additional 18% are somewhat satisfied, and only 2% report that they are dissatisfied with their spouse.

Most Albertans will marry, and most Albertans will marry only once. Seventy five percent of all Albertans over 18 years old have married at least once, with only 10% having married more than once. 87% of those who have ever married, have married only once. However, some of these may no longer be living with their spouse.

Over 82% of the Albertans who are currently legally married are in their first marriage.

Table 3

Percent of Albertans Married at Different Ages

Number of Marriages	Age of Albertans 1990				Total
	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 +	
Never Married	319,000	90,000	14,000	12,000	435,000
%	63	15	3	6	25
Married Once	181,000	455,000	340,000	149,000	1,125,000
%	36	74	82	78	65
Married Twice	8,000	67,000	60,000	26,000	161,000
%	2	11	14	14	9
Married 3 or More Times	0	6,000	4,000	5,000	14,000
%	0	1	1	3	1
Total	508,000	618,000	416,000	193,000	1,736,000
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

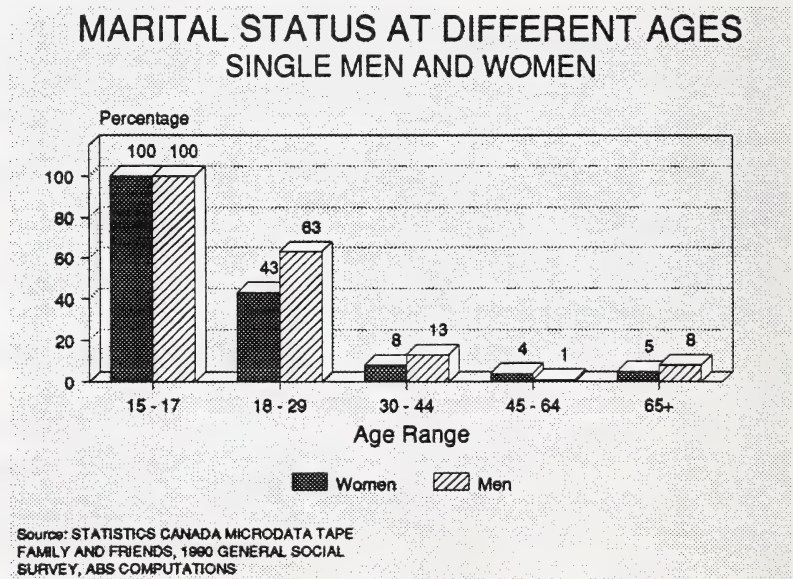
Source: Statistics Canada, Microdata File, Family and Friends, 1990 General Social Survey.

Marital Status at Different Ages

Single Men and Women

Very few Albertans remain single for a lifetime. Single people are those who have never married and are not currently living in a common-law relationship. If we look at a cross section of Albertans, at different ages, of those in the 30 to 44 age range, less than 13% of men and 8% of women are single, and in the senior age group, less than 8% of men and 5% of women are single.

Figure 11

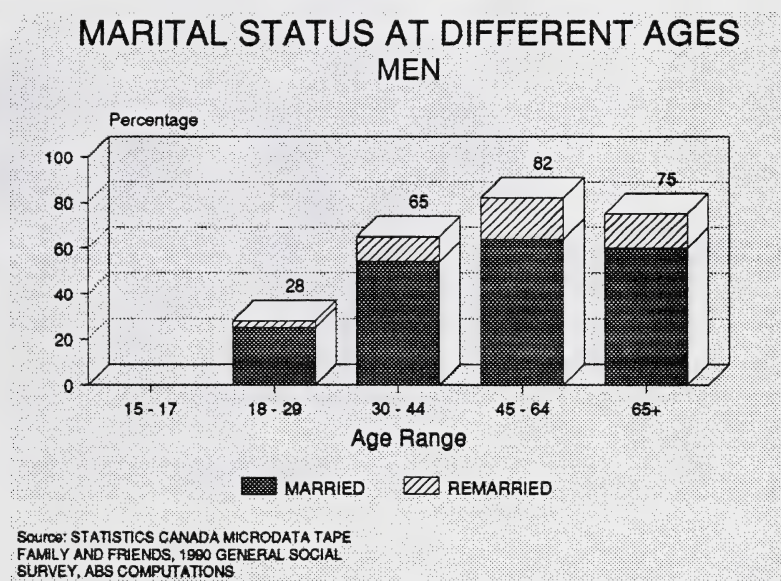


Marriage and Remarriage

The majority of Albertans, in each age group after 30, are married and, in the majority of marriages, both members of the couple are in their first marriage. Marriage refers to those who have stated that their current legal status is married. Remarriage refers to a marriage where one or both of the spouses have had one or more previous marriages.

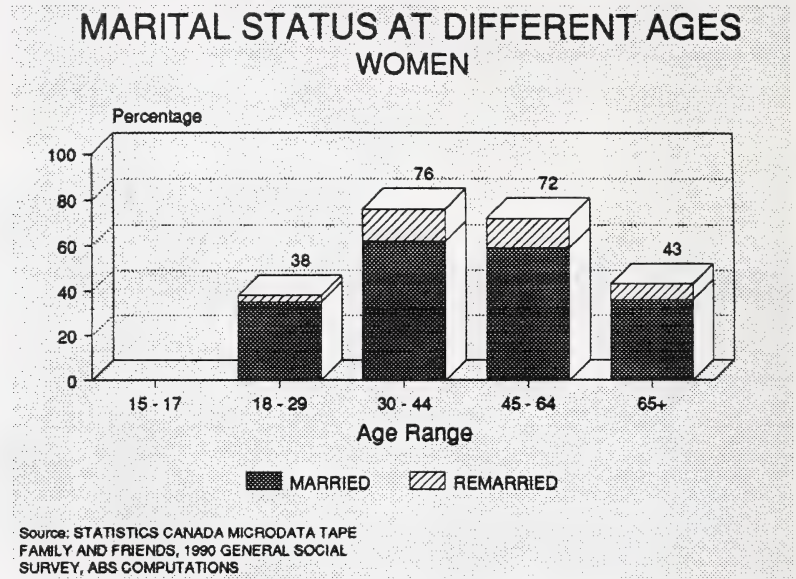
There are different patterns for men and women. Women are typically two years younger at marriage than are men. Women in the older age ranges are less likely than men to remarry, after either divorce or widowhood³⁶.

Figure 12



Women are more likely to be widowed in their older years, both because of the fact that they are, on average, younger than their husbands and because, on average, women live longer than men. In the over 65 age group, 42% of women and only 12% of men are widowed.

Figure 13

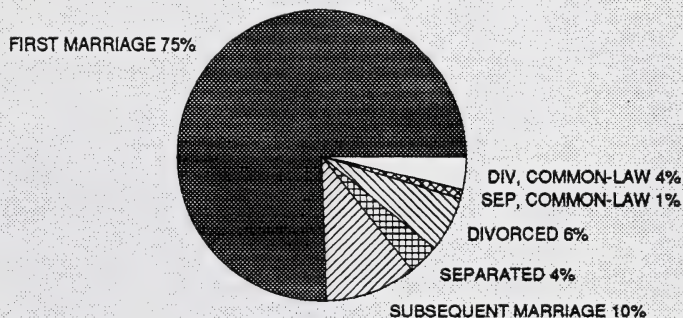


Marital Stability

Contrary to popular belief, most Alberta marriages last. Of the 75% of Albertans 18 and over who have ever married, 4% are now widowed. Of all those who have ever married for the first time and are not widowed, 75% are currently still in their first marriage. About 4% are separated, and 6% are divorced from either their first or subsequent marriage and 10% are in a subsequent (second, third, etc.) marriage. An additional 1% are separated and living in a common-law relationship. Four percent are divorced and living in a common-law relationship.

Figure 14

CURRENT STATE OF ALBERTA MARRIAGES



Source: STATISTICS CANADA MICRODATA TAPE
FAMILY AND FRIENDS, 1990 GENERAL SOCIAL
SURVEY.

Risk Factors for Marital Breakdown

Higher divorce rates are statistically associated with: teenage marriage, pregnancy at the time of marriage, low socio-economic status and educational level, residence in high divorce areas, brief acquaintance before marriage, dissimilar backgrounds, and one or both partners having been previously married and divorced.⁹ In addition, living common-law before marriage is associated with an increased risk of divorce.⁹

The reasons people give for divorce include: emotional incompatibility, psychopathology, alcoholism, physical violence, incompatibility in terms of lifestyle and life goals, infidelity, immaturity, irresponsibility, and inability to hold employment.⁹

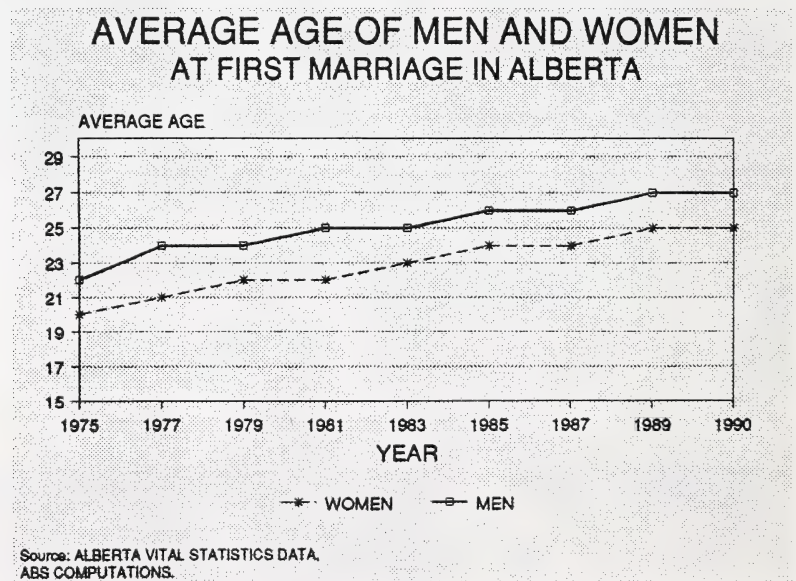
Trends in Marriage

In 1990, 39,610 Albertans married. The annual number of marriages is down slightly from the decade average of 40,600, even though the population is larger. The proportion of single people marrying has been declining over the past 25 years³⁶. In 1986, of every 1,000 single women in Alberta, 93 married during the year. This is a drop from the 1961 rate, when 135 per 1,000 married during the year. This drop in the marriage rate is largely because men and women are delaying marriage. However, in the last three years (1987, 1988, and 1989), there has been an increase in the proportion of single people marrying, and therefore the total first marriage rate has been rising, both in Alberta and in Canada, which may indicate that the trend toward delayed marriages is moderating³⁷.

Delayed Marriages

First marriages occur at later ages now than in the past. The average age of women at first marriage was 25 years old in 1990, and for men, the average age was 27. In 1975, the average age for both was 5 years younger.

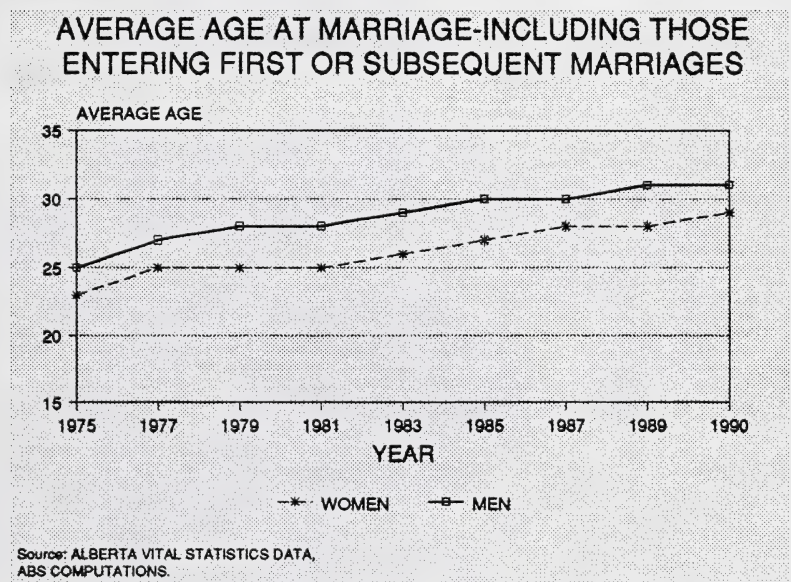
Figure 15



More Remarriages

A similar pattern of increasing age at marriage is seen when all marriages are considered, including both first marriages and marriages where one or both of the spouses have had a previous marriage. The average age at marriage for both men and women is higher than in the past, since an increasing proportion of couples include a partner who is entering second or subsequent marriage. The average age for all men at marriage was 31 in 1990, and for all women at marriage was 29. In 1975, the average age of both was 6 years younger.

Figure 16



Canadian Trend

There has been a trend toward delayed marriages in Canada, as well as in Alberta, since the early 1970's. However, the longer term patterns show that in the 1940's the age of men at first marriage was nearly 28 years old and for women it was over 24 years old. There was a trend toward younger marriages, which prevailed into the early 1970's. At that point, the trend reversed; there has been a trend toward delayed marriages in recent years³⁴. There are now signs that the age at first marriage may begin to stabilize, or possibly to begin to move back to younger ages at marriage⁴³.

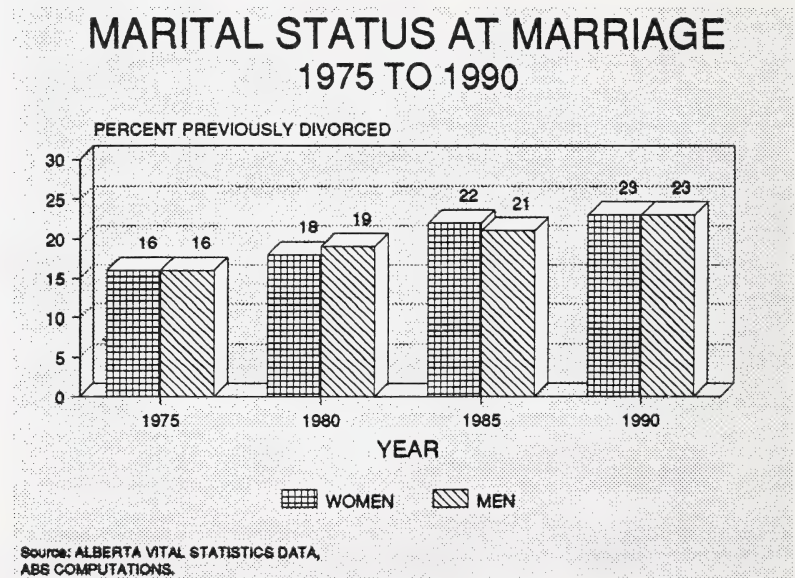
In Most Marriages Both Partners are Single

In 1990, there were 19,805 marriages in Alberta (39,610 people). Most marriages were between two single people (64%). However, this is less than the 73% who were both single in 1975. The proportion of marriages where one or both spouses has been married one or more times is now up to 36% of all marriages (1990).

More Marriages Include a Partner Who Was Previously Divorced

An increasing number of marriages include a partner who has been previously divorced. In 1990, about 23% of both men and women who were marrying had been previously divorced. In 1975, only about 16% of each were previously divorced. The proportion of women who were marrying and who have been previously widowed fell from 3.7% to 2.8% between 1975 and 1990; the proportion of widowed men who were marrying fell from 3.7% to 2.2%.

Figure 17

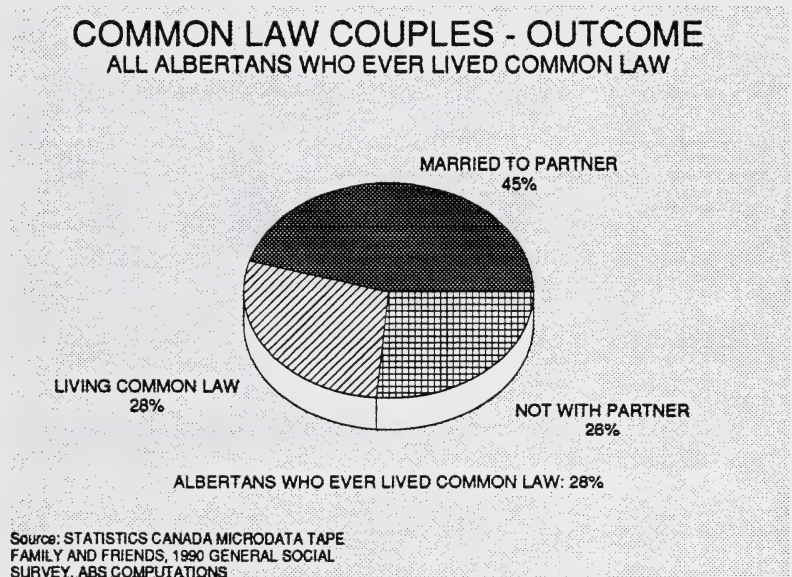


Common-Law Couples

Common-law couples are couples where a man and woman are living as a couple but are not legally married. The legal status of each partner may be single, separated, divorced, or widowed. In Alberta, there are 619,000 adults between 18 and 64 who are currently unmarried. Of these, 22% are living in common-law relationships²⁴.

About 28% of Albertans over 15 years old have lived, at some point, in a common-law relationship. A few have had multiple common-law relationships. If we look at all those who have ever lived common-law, 28% are currently living with a common-law partner, 45% are now married to their former common-law partner, and 26% are no longer with their partner.

Figure 18



Living common-law is often a prelude to marriage among younger people. About 33% of currently married people 18 to 29, who are in their first marriage, lived in a common-law relationship with their spouse before marriage. In contrast, common-law unions preceded marriage for only 16% of 30 to 44 year olds, and only 2% of 45 to 64 year olds who are in their first marriage.

Living common-law is even more common as a prelude to remarriage. Over half (56%) of all Albertans in marriages where one or both spouses are remarried, lived in a common-law relationship with their spouse before marriage.

Table 4

**Currently Married Albertans
Who Lived in a Common-Law Relationship
With Their Spouse Before Marriage**

Age	Total Currently Married	First Marriage			Remarriage for One or Both		
		Total	Lived Common-Law With Spouse Before Marriage		Total	Lived Common-Law With Spouse Before Marriage	
			Yes	No		Yes	No
18 - 29	170,000	154,000	33%	64%	16,000	66%	34%
30 - 44	437,000	358,000	16%	84%	79,000	64%	36%
45 - 64	318,000	253,000	2%	92%	64,000	44%	56%
18 - 64	925,000	766,000	15%	85%	160,000	56%	44%

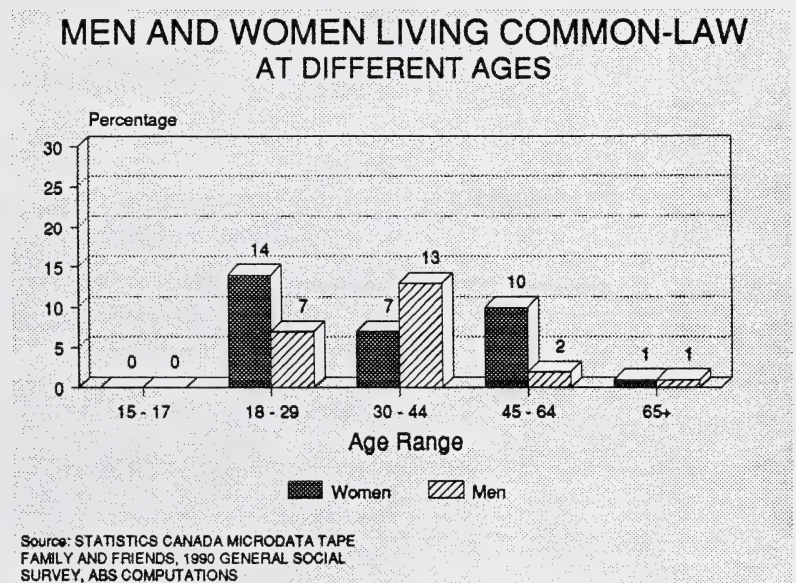
Source: Statistics Canada Microdata File,
Family and Friends, 1990 General Social Survey.

Nearly 14% of young women between 18 and 29 are living common-law, and nearly 10% of women between 45 and 64 are living in common-law relationships.

Men are most likely to be living common-law between the ages of 30 and 44, when over 13% of men are in common-law relationships.

This is not exclusively a pattern of the young, since over 1% of seniors are living in common-law relationships.

Figure 19



Common Law Families

Of the 143,000 people of all ages (including seniors) who are currently living in common-law relationships, about 50,800 have their children living with them. This includes children of any age, even adults.

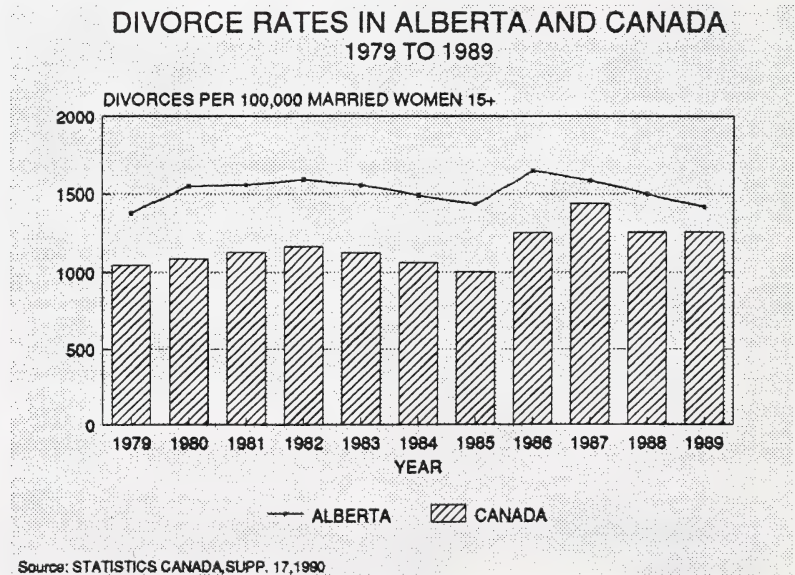
Divorce

"Divorce...functions as one pathway to the establishment of one-parent households and/or remarriage families; secondly, whether or not children are involved, and whether or not a couple actually divorce, the very prevalence of divorce has fundamentally changed the meaning and structure of marriage, by making it a more [voluntary] union."

- Margrit Eichler, *Families in Canada Today*, 1988¹⁹

While Alberta's divorce rate remains high, it has fallen steadily since 1986, and in 1989 was at the lowest level since 1980. In 1989, 8,227 divorces were granted to Alberta couples, which is about 1.4% of all married couples. Alberta has the highest divorce rate in Canada, when the number of divorces is compared to the total number of married women¹⁴.

Figure 20



When the number of divorces is compared to the entire population, Alberta has 339.5 divorces per 100,000 population. This is higher than the Canadian divorce rate (307.8 per 100,000 population), and higher than all other provinces, except British Columbia (348.1 divorces per 100,000 population). However, the divorce rate, as a proportion of the population, has also been decreasing steadily in Alberta, from its high of 396.7 divorces per 100,000 population in 1986.

The divorce rate is highest in the 25 to 34 year age range with over 2 divorces for every hundred married men and women in 1989. The average duration of marriage at the time of the divorce is 11.1 years. The average age at divorce is 37.8 for males and 35.1 for females.

Table 5

Age Specific Divorce Rates Per 100 Married Albertans

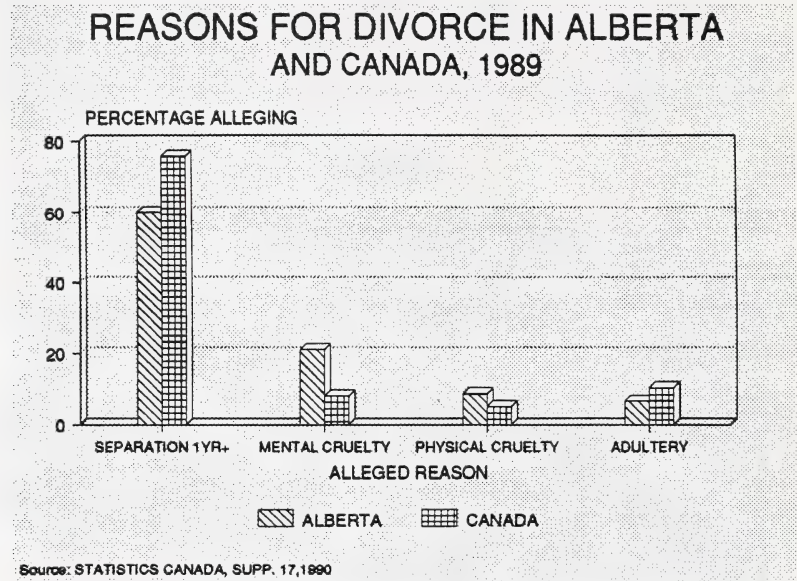
Married Albertans - 1989										
	15-19 years	20-24 years	25-29 years	30-34 years	35-39 years	40-44 years	45-49 years	50-54 years	55+ years	Overall
Married Men	1.34	1.82	2.10	2.16	1.91	1.63	1.39	.93	.40	---
Married Women	.92	1.92	2.30	2.01	1.68	1.48	1.08	.66	.30	1.41

Source: Statistics Canada, Supp. 17, 1990

Reasons for Divorce

The only grounds for divorce, since 1986, is marital dissolution, and the four reasons for proving marital dissolution are separation for over a year, mental cruelty, physical cruelty and adultery. Separation for over a year is the most frequent reason alleged for divorce in Alberta (60% of divorces). Albertans allege mental and physical cruelty more often than other Canadians, and fewer divorcing couples in Alberta, than in other parts of Canada, allege adultery as the reason for divorce.

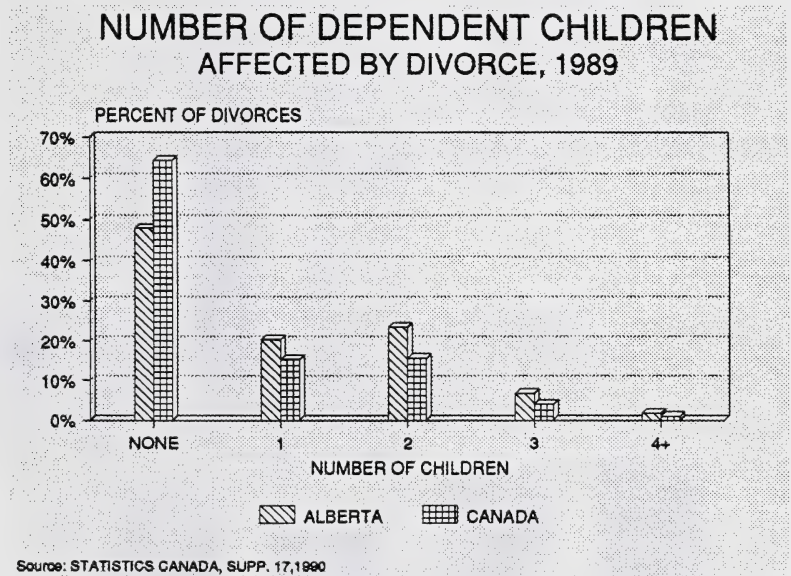
Figure 21



Children of Divorce

Nearly half of all of the divorces in Alberta in 1989 involved no dependent children (3,941 divorces). However, divorces in Alberta were more likely to involve children than in Canada as a whole. Most divorces involving children were in families with one or two children. In total, in Alberta, 7,754 dependent children, or about 1% of all Alberta children under 18, experienced the divorce of their parents during 1989.

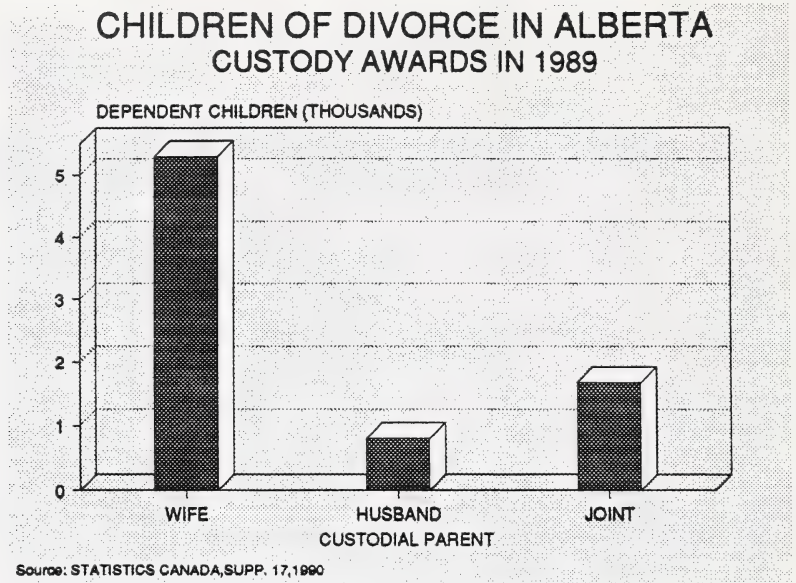
Figure 22



Custody of Children

In most divorce cases, custody of the children is granted to the wife (5,291 children). The second most common decision is joint custody, which was granted for 1,666 children. In 797 families, custody of the children was granted to the husband.

Figure 23



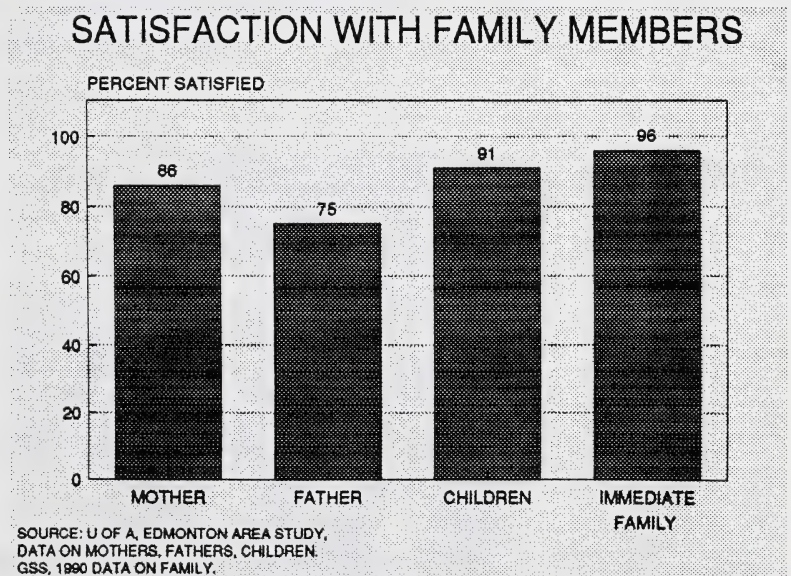
Parenting

"...the informal education that takes place in the family is not merely a pleasant prelude, but rather a powerful prerequisite for success in formal education ... [and] to function responsively and creatively as an adult in the realms of work, family life and citizenship."

Urie Bronfenbrenner, *Discovering What Families Do*, 1990¹³

Looking at the patterns over a lifespan, most Albertans do have and raise children. Statistics Canada's 1990 General Social Survey on Family and Friends found that over 80% of 15 to 17 year old Albertans state that they plan to have children. Overall, 96% of Albertans across the province are satisfied or very satisfied with their immediate families. Similarly, when asked about their satisfaction with family members, over 86% of Albertans surveyed in the Edmonton Area Survey are satisfied or very satisfied with their mothers, 75% are satisfied or very satisfied with their fathers and 91% are satisfied or very satisfied with their children.

Figure 24



Most Albertans Do Have Children

By the time they reach 45, over 87% of Albertans have had one or more children by birth.

Table 6

Children Born to Albertans of Different Ages - 1990

Age of Albertans	No Children	One or More Children
18 to 29	74%	26%
30 to 44	27%	73%
45 +	13%	87%

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, Family and Friends Microdata File, 1990.

Step-Children

Over 8.5% of adult Albertans, aged 30 to 44, have raised step-children. This is more than double the proportion of seniors who have raised step-children (4.1%). Overall, 5.5% of Albertans over 18 have raised a step-child (97,000 adults).

Only 1.3% of Albertans who are in couples where both partners are in their first marriage have raised one or more step-children, most likely as a result of parents bringing their children who were born outside of the marriage into the marriage. About 28% of remarried Albertans (about 50,000), have raised a step-child. About 15.5% of Albertans in common-law couples, 9% of divorced, and 10% of separated Albertans have raised step-children.

Adopted Children

Overall, 4.7% of adult Albertans, 18 years and over (83,000 adults), have raised one or more adopted children, not including step-children that they may have adopted.

Childlessness May Be Increasing

As many as one in five women who are currently between 35 and 45 years of age may never bear a child. Childlessness fell during the "baby boom" years, but seems to be rising again⁴.

Of the generation of Canadian women born between 1915 and 1919, about 17% had never born a child.

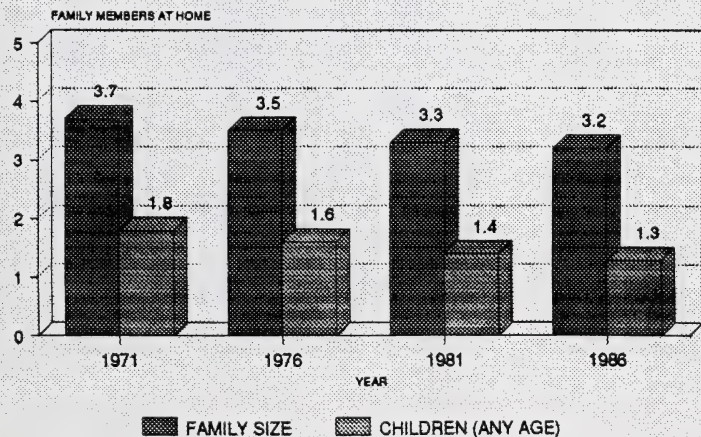
Of the generation born between 1935 and 1939, who were of prime child-bearing age at the peak of the "baby boom", only 11% had never born a child. It is estimated, from the General Social Survey (1990) data, that of women born between 1945 and 1949, over 20% will remain childless. This is predicted because they are now over 40 years old and without children. The rates of childlessness for women born between 1950 and 1954 are now over 22%. These women are currently over 35 years old, and it is predicted that only a small proportion will have children in the future. These women may have fewer relatives to rely on for assistance when they reach their senior years.

Family Size

Alberta families are getting smaller. The average number of persons per family dropped, from 3.7 in 1971 to 3.2 in 1986. The average number of children living at home dropped, from 1.8 in 1971 to 1.3 in 1986. This data includes children of any age, even adults, if they have never married, and are living at home.

Figure 25

FAMILY SIZE AND CHILDREN LIVING AT HOME ALBERTA, 1971 - 1986.



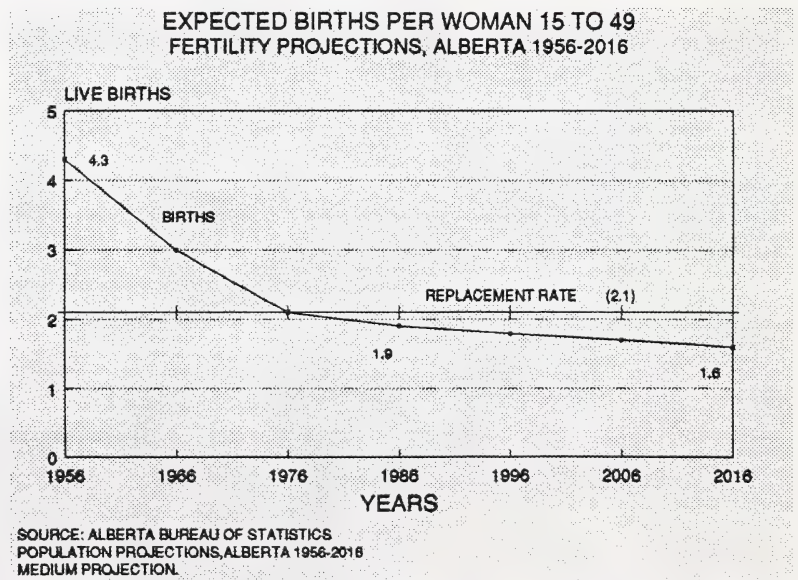
SOURCE: ALBERTA CENSUS PROFILE 1971-1986

Families Are Having Fewer Children

The number of children born per woman of childbearing age has been falling in Canada since the turn of the century⁹. In the thirty years from 1956 to 1986, the birth rate in Alberta fell from 4.3 children per woman in Alberta, aged 15 to 49, to 1.9 children. For about 15 years now, Alberta's birthrate has been below 2.1 children per woman, which is considered to be the "replacement level"; that is the number of children that are required for a couple to replace themselves, taking into account the effects of mortality. This is the rate at which the number of children born each year would just replace the number of people expected to die, so that over a long period of time the population would be expected to remain stable.

Birthrates are falling for several reasons: people are waiting longer to get married; couples are postponing the birth of their first child; couples prefer smaller families; there has been a reduction in unwanted or unplanned pregnancies; economic factors constrain childbearing; and there has been an increase in the number of single parent families, which tend to be smaller than two parent families⁹.

Figure 26



Possible Trend Toward More Children in the Future

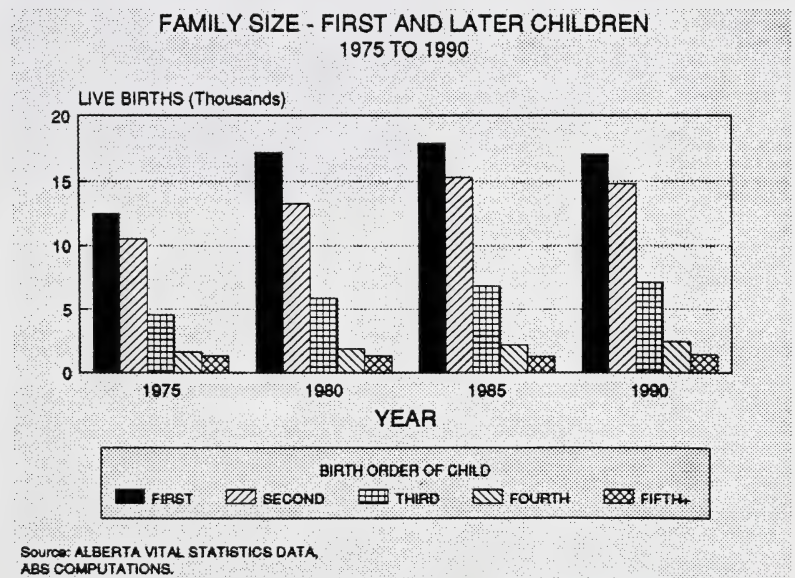
There are signs that the trend toward having fewer children may be reversing in Alberta. Since 1982, the total fertility rate has been stable or rising.

In 1980, Alberta had a total fertility rate of 2.0 for women aged 15 to 49. The rate then fell to 1.8 in 1982. However, contrary to expectations, the total fertility rate rose to 1.9 in 1988, and then to 2.0 in 1989. Canada as a whole, in 1989, also had an increase in the total fertility rate, with Alberta having the second highest increase in fertility. The rise in fertility may not continue, but it does introduce the possibility of a reversal in the trend and is consistent with recently rising trends in the Scandinavian countries²³.

Births

In 1990, there were 42,928 births in Alberta. The number of first and second children has dropped slightly since 1985, even though the population has grown. However, the number of third and subsequent births is up slightly.

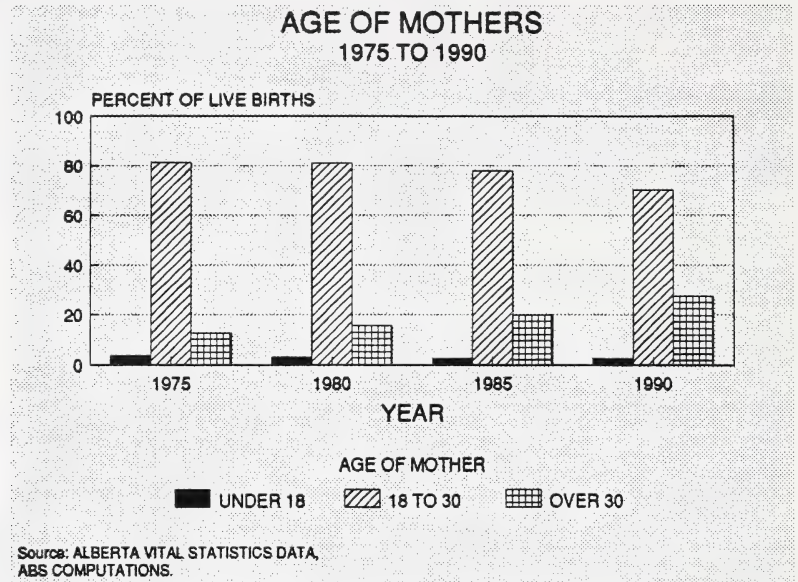
Figure 27



More Older Mothers

There has been an increase in the number of births to mothers over 30 and a parallel increase in the number of fathers over 30. This is partly due to men and women in the large baby boom population bulge now reaching childbearing age and partly due to the delay of childbearing by couples*.

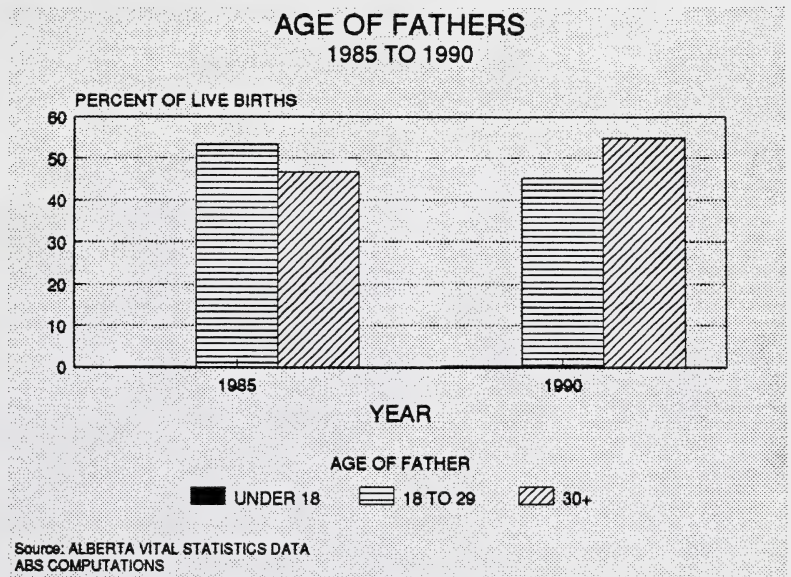
Figure 28



More Older Fathers

In 1985, the majority of fathers were under 30. In 1990, the majority were over 30 at the birth of their child. This reflects the large numbers of the baby boom generation who are having children in their thirties.

Figure 29

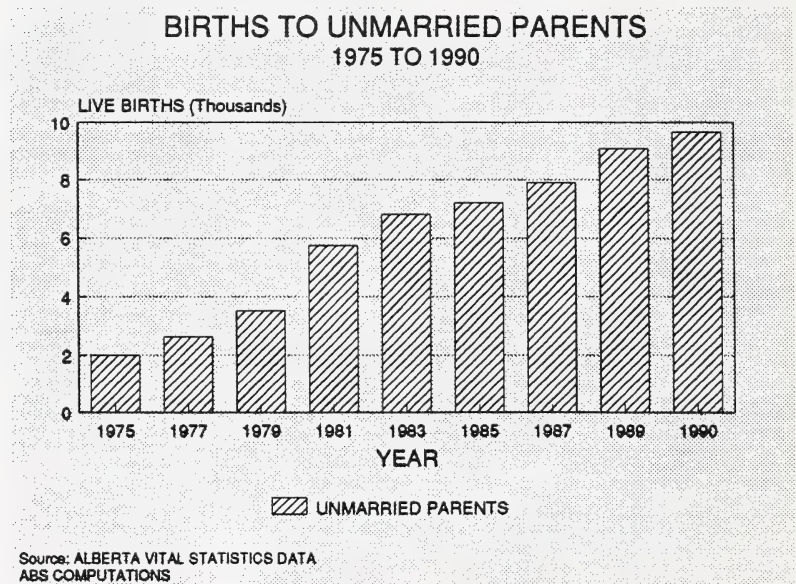


Births to Unmarried Parents

The proportion of babies born to unmarried parents has more than doubled in all age ranges, including the over 30 age group, where unmarried births have increased from 4% to 9% of all births.

The total number of children born to unmarried parents has risen from 2009 in 1975 to 9668 in 1990. The proportion of births to unmarried parents rose from 7% of all births in 1975 to 23% of live births in 1990. However, it should be noted that common-law status is not reported in Vital Statistics data and some of these children may have been born into common-law families.

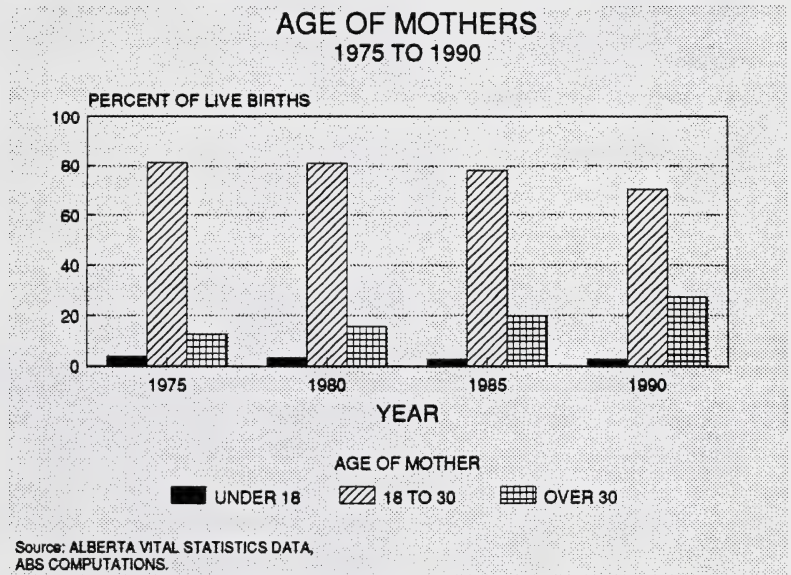
Figure 30



More Unmarried Mothers in All Age Groups

The number of children born to unmarried parents has increased in all age categories. The majority of children born to unmarried parents are born when the mother is between 18 and 30 years of age. In 1990, over 1,000 (over 10%) of the children born to unmarried parents were born to mothers over 30.

Figure 31



Unmarried Fathers

Very little is known about the fathers of children born to unmarried parents. The father has rights and responsibilities in relation to his child, whether or not the father is married to the mother. If parentage is acknowledged, or determined through the courts by a paternity order, the child's opportunities in life are likely to be improved, since the child has two parents and two sets of grandparents on which to potentially depend³⁴.

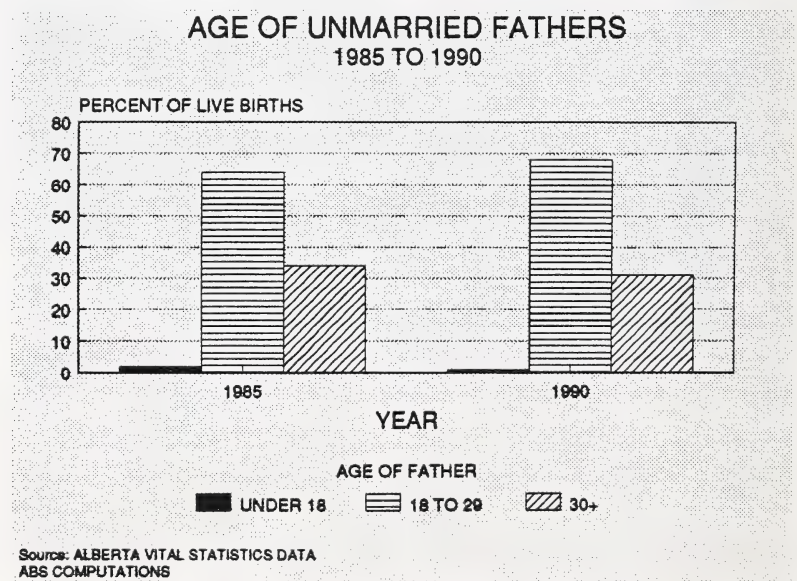
More Fathers Acknowledge Paternity

Paternity was acknowledged for 65% of unmarried births in 1990. This is a significant increase from the 51% acknowledged only 5 years earlier in 1985.

Age of Unmarried Fathers

Most fathers of children born to unmarried parents were between 18 and 29. The age of the father is only recorded for the 65% of fathers who acknowledged paternity.

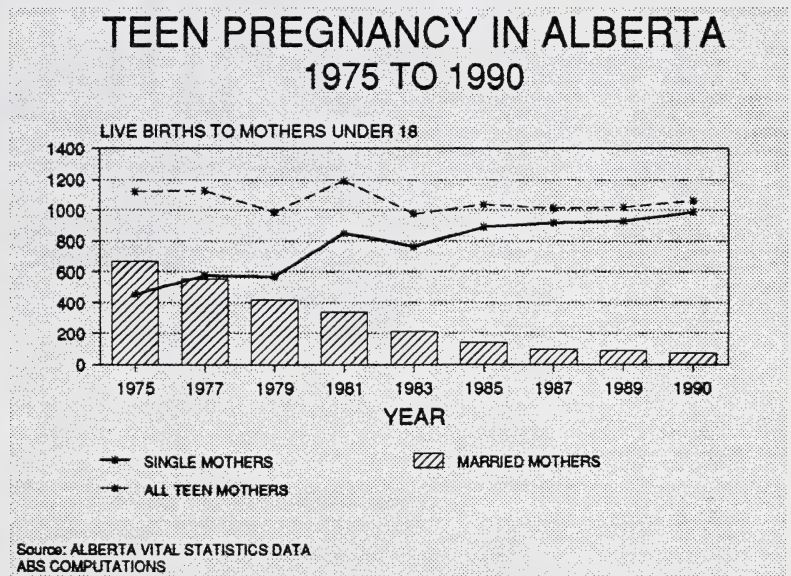
Figure 32



Births to Teen Mothers

The number of children born to mothers under 18 years of age has remained relatively steady since 1975. However, the proportion of teenaged parents who are married at the time of birth of the child has dropped from over 60% to under 7%, in the same time period. In 1990, there were 1033 children born to unmarried mothers under 18, and 70 children born to married parents, where the mother was under 18. Early childbearing has been shown to predict negative consequences for the mother, in terms of education, earnings, and occupational status. Further, there is an increased probability of health problems for the baby, such as low birth weight². The parents of 501 of these infants did not acknowledge paternity. Only about 14% of the fathers of children born to mothers under 18 were themselves less than 18 at the time of the birth. Most (73%) were between 18 and 24. The remaining 13% were 25 and over.

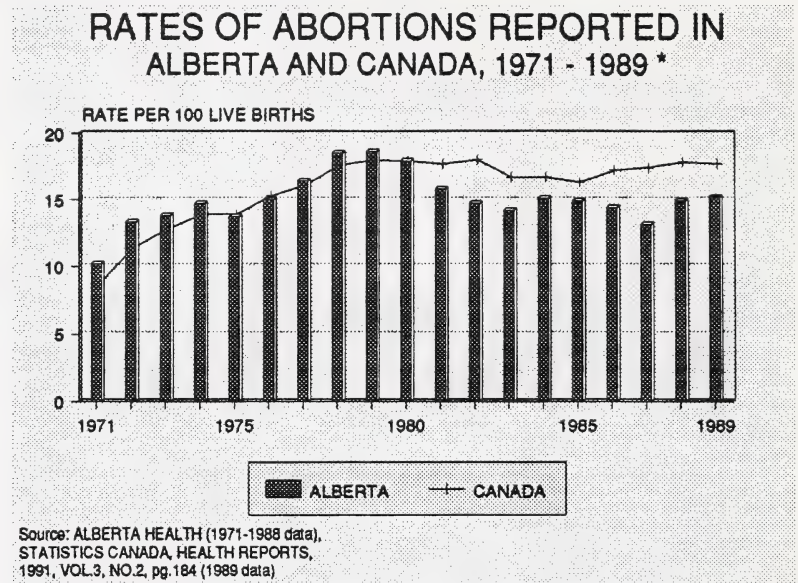
Figure 33



Abortions

Alberta is below the Canadian average for the rate of abortions as a proportion of live births. The rate of abortions is lower in 1989 than it was around 1980. However, there are about 15 abortions in Alberta for each 100 live births and the number of abortions has increased from 1987 to 1989. These data refer to all abortions performed on women who were residents of Alberta, if the abortion was billed or reported through the health care insurance of any Canadian province.

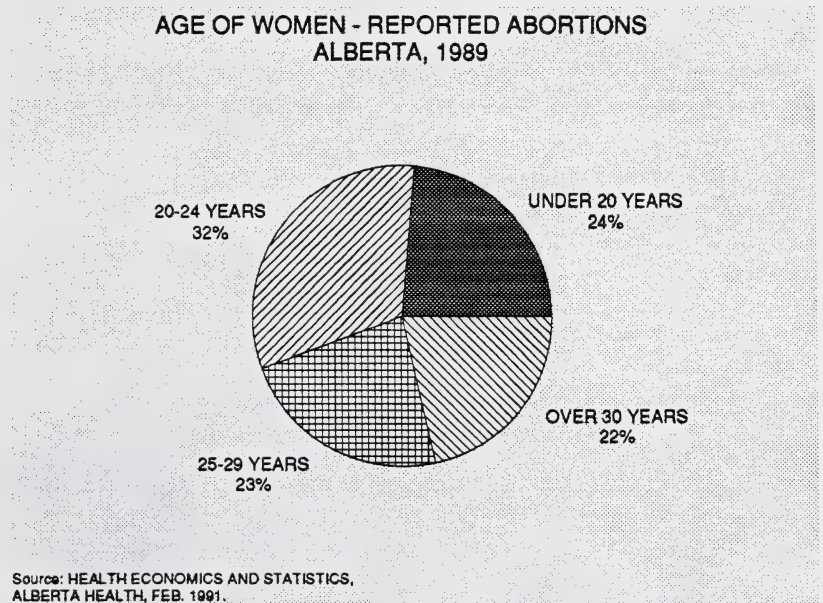
Figure 34



*About 2,000 abortions a year are performed on Canadian women in the U.S.A., so there is some underreporting in these figures⁵⁷. Abortions performed in private clinics are usually not reported.

About 24% of abortions were performed on women under 20 years old. Most abortions (76%) were performed on women 20 and over⁵³.

Figure 35

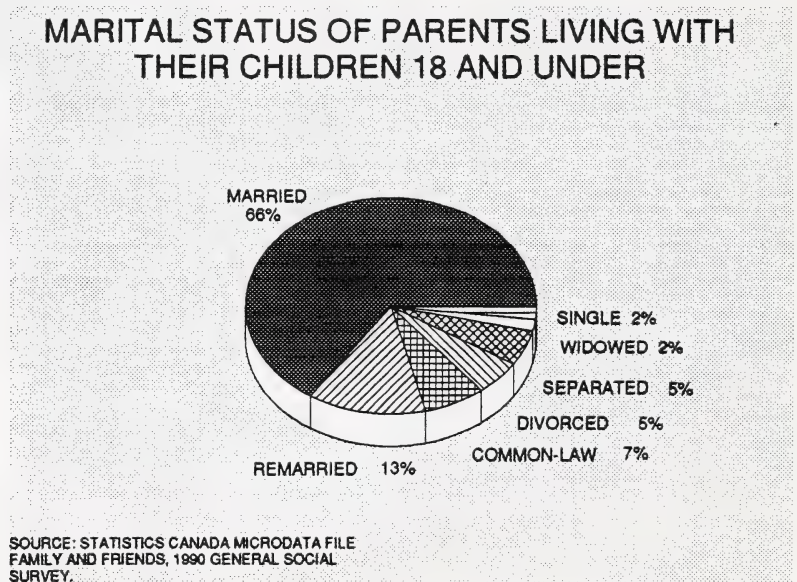


Who is Raising Alberta's Children?

The majority of Alberta families who are raising children (18 and under) are married couples, both of whom are in their first marriage - 66% of the families raising children are included in this category. About 13% of families raising children are married couple families, where one or both of the spouses have been previously married. About 7% of those raising children are living in common-law couples. The legal status of those who are living common-law may be never married, separated, divorced or widowed.

As a result, about 86% of families raising children are two parent families. Of the 14% raising children as lone parents, 5% are divorced, 5% are separated, 2% are widowed, and 2% have never married.

Figure 36



How Many of These Families are "Nuclear" Families?

The traditional nuclear family consists of a husband and wife in a lifelong union, together with their children. If we define children as those who are under the age of 18, then about 2/3 of families raising children (66%) are nuclear families. If "traditional" families are further defined as families that rely on the income of one male breadwinner, then the number of traditional nuclear families (with one male earner) would fall to less than 52,000 families, or less than 15.4% of all families with children under 18.

Lone Parent Families

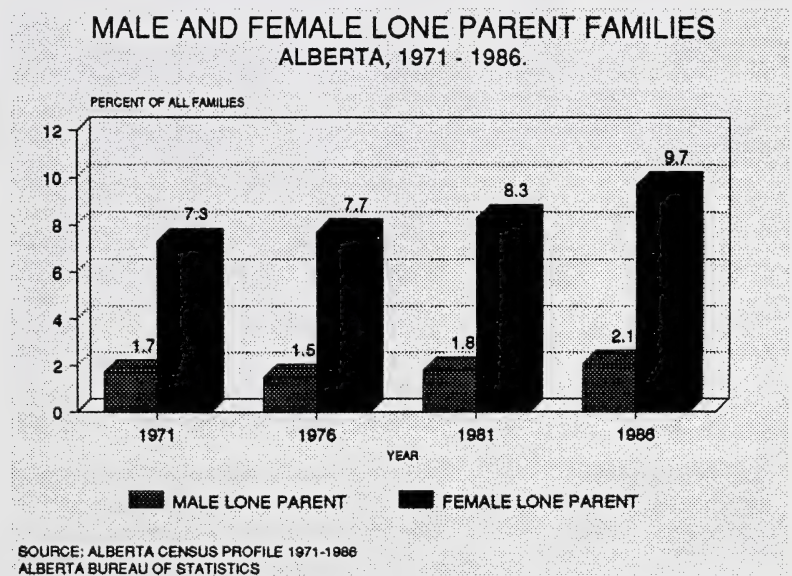
Number of Lone Parent Families is Increasing

A lone parent family is defined as a parent with his or her dependent children, under 18 years old, either living in their own household or sharing a household with others, such as a grandparent. Persons living in a common-law relationship are not considered to be lone parents.

The number of lone parent families has been increasing in all of the industrialized countries of the world since the early 1970's³⁷. In Canada, lone parent families, with children under 18, increased from 11% of all families in 1980 to 14% of all families in 1990³⁸. In Alberta, lone parent families increased from 9% in 1971 to 10% in 1980 and to 13% of all families in 1990³⁵.

Data on census families - lone parents with single children of any age, including adult children, also show an increase in lone parent families over time.

Figure 37



In 1990, about 87% of lone parent families with children under 18 were headed by women (about 47,000 families) and 13% were headed by male lone parents (about 7,000 families).

Lone parent families with children under 18 (53,000 families) represent nearly 16% of all families with children under 18 (284,000). In 1990, there were more lone parent families with children under 18 than there were two parent families that relied on one income, the "traditional" family type (52,000). The remainder of two parent families with children under 18 relied on two or more earners (232,000).

Between 1980 and 1990, lone parent families with children under 18 increased from 31,000 families to 53,000 families, an increase of 70%. During the same period, two parent families with children under 18 increased from 278,000 families to 284,000 families, an increase of only 2%.

Pathways Into and Out of Lone Parenthood

There are several paths into lone parenthood: marriage and childbirth, with subsequent widowhood, separation, or divorce; or childbirth without marriage. There are several paths out of lone parenthood: reconciliation, marriage, remarriage, entering into a common-law relationship, or the growth of the children into adulthood. Some parents and children experience repeated cycles of two parent and lone parent families³⁷.

The increased numbers of lone parent families are caused by increased rates of separation, divorce, and childbirth without marriage, and by decreased rates of remarriage following widowhood and divorce, particularly among older men and women³⁶.

Economic Risks

There are particular concerns about lone parent families, because they are at risk of economic disadvantage from a variety of causes: the lack of support from the absent spouse, the inadequacy of earnings, or the inability to work at all, due to personal attributes, labour market factors, or family responsibilities³⁷. Recent research that follows the course of families into and out of lone parent status suggests that characteristics of the parent, such as education, job skills, and work experience may influence not only income, but also the probability of becoming married or remarried³¹. Therefore, those children who remain in a lone parent family the longest may be those whose lone parent is least able to support them economically and least likely to marry or remarry³⁷.

Historical Level Similar, But From Different Causes

Rates of lone parenthood in the past have been as high as today's rates, but the cause of lone parenthood was usually the death of one of the spouses, rather than separation, divorce, or childbirth outside of marriage. Typically, the death of a parent affects children who are older than those children whose parents divorce, or children who are born to unmarried parents^{32,36}.

Family Responsibilities

"The fragmentation and dispersion of family life has paradoxically made 'family' ties (with relatives or friends) seem more precious the scarcer they become. As a result, people are perhaps more willing to work hard at building rewarding personal relationships ... Probably at no other time in history have family members consciously thought and talked so much about what family means, why it is so important, and what they ought to do about preserving it."

- Kenneth J. Gergen, *The Saturated Family*, 1991⁵¹

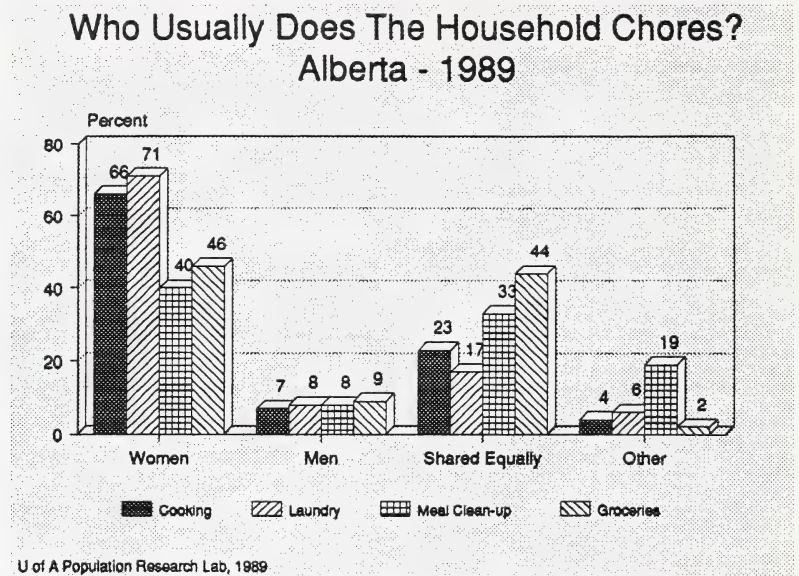
The demographic and economic changes which have occurred in families have been accompanied by changes in the responsibilities of men and women in the home¹⁴. Many of the tasks and responsibilities in the home that have traditionally been the role of women are increasingly shared by men, even though women continue to carry the major responsibility.

Analyzing household chores is complex, because both men and women report that they do a larger share of the work than their spouse recognizes. The following data are from the 1989 All Alberta Survey, and the 1989 Edmonton Area Survey by the Population Research Laboratory at the University of Alberta. The data include responses from men and women living in couples, across all ages, and across all family life stages.

Housework

Women usually do the laundry (71%) and cook the meals (66%). Grocery shopping is more often equally shared than other chores (44%), although in families where it is not shared equally, it is usually done by women (46%) rather than by men (9%). Meal clean up is usually done by women (40%) or shared equally (33%).

Figure 38

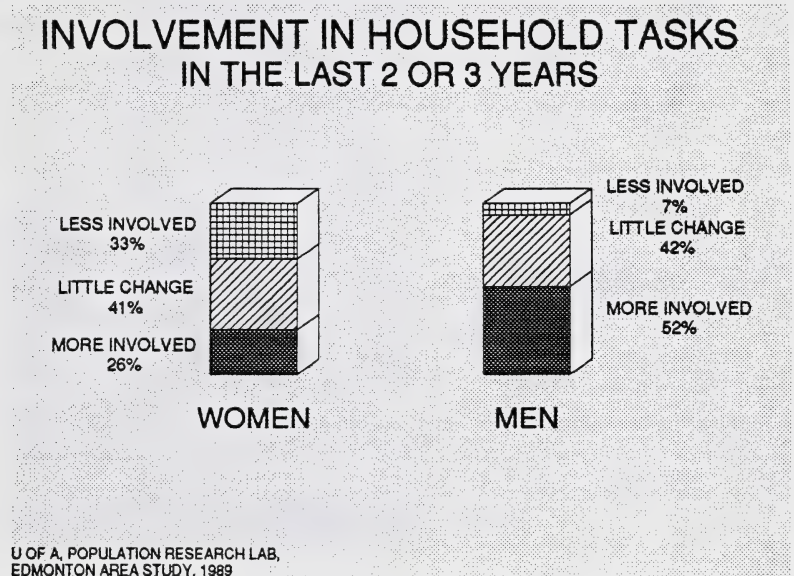


When housework is analyzed in detail, there are some differences in the division of tasks, depending on whether the husband or wife is responding, the presence or absence of small children, the age of the couple, and on their family work patterns outside the home. Men are more likely than women to report that housework is shared equally. Women are more likely to report that they do the majority of most tasks. In couples where the wife is employed full time, and in younger couples, women are more likely to report more sharing of housework than is reported in older couples, and in couples where the woman is not in the labour force. The presence of small children predicts a more traditional pattern, with the wife doing more of the housework, particularly in lower income households⁴⁷.

Men are More Involved in Household Tasks

Couples with or without children were also asked about their involvement in household tasks over the last few years. Over half (52%) of the men state that they have become more involved in household tasks during the last few years.

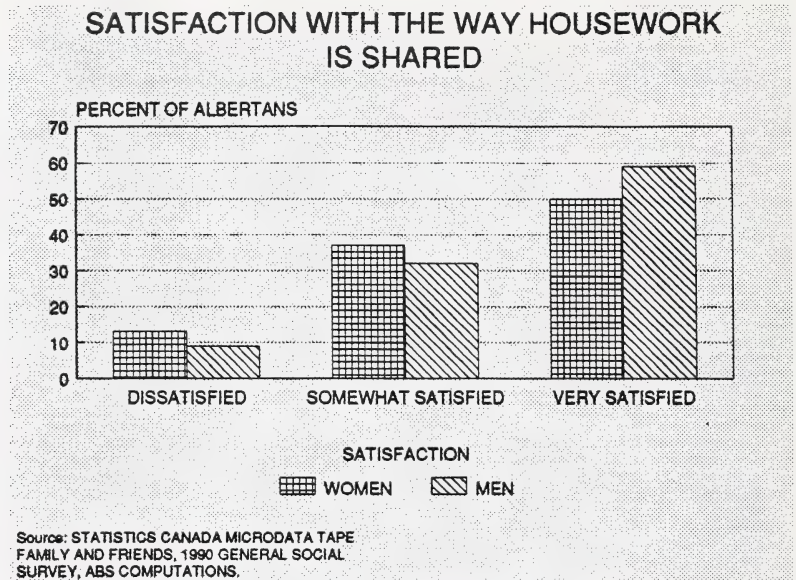
Figure 39



Most Are Satisfied With the Way Housework is Shared

Most Albertans are somewhat satisfied or very satisfied with the way housework is shared, although men are somewhat more likely than women to be very satisfied.

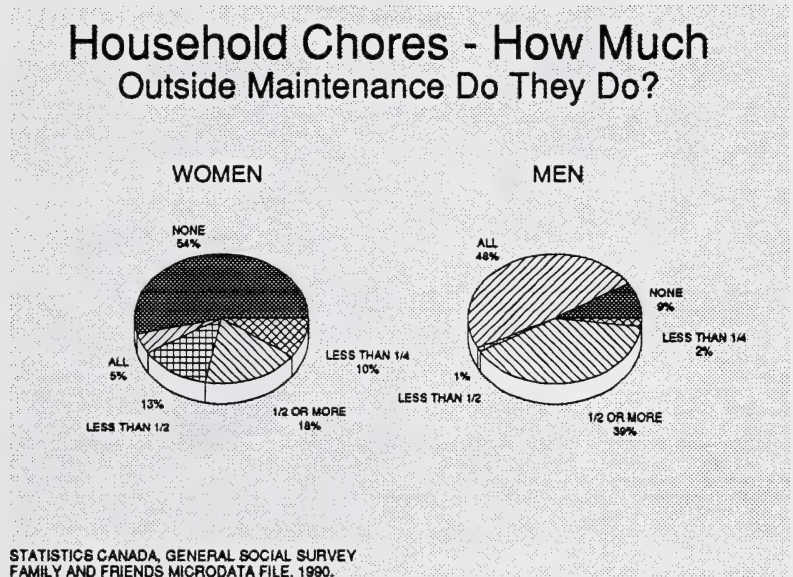
Figure 40



Outside Maintenance

Outside maintenance is most often done by men. 54% of women living in couples, with or without children, say that they do no outside maintenance. In contrast, 87% of the men say that they do half or more, or all, of the outside maintenance for the family.

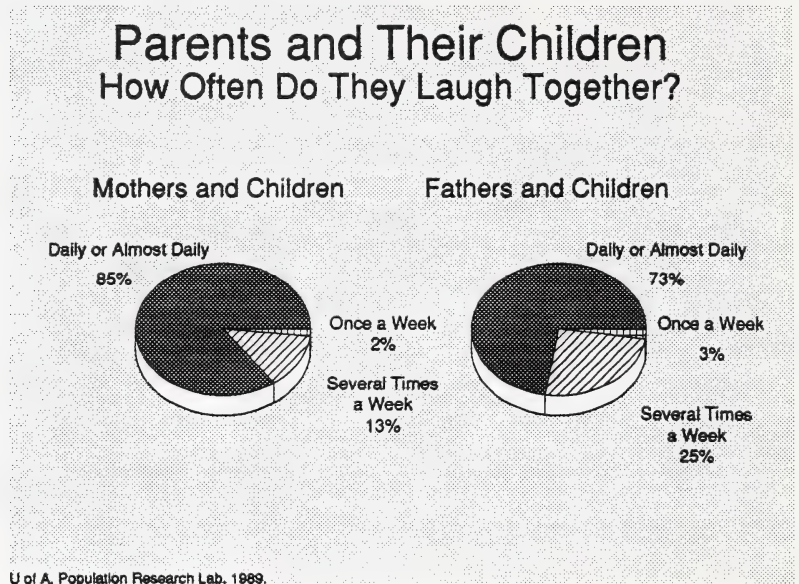
Figure 41



Child Rearing

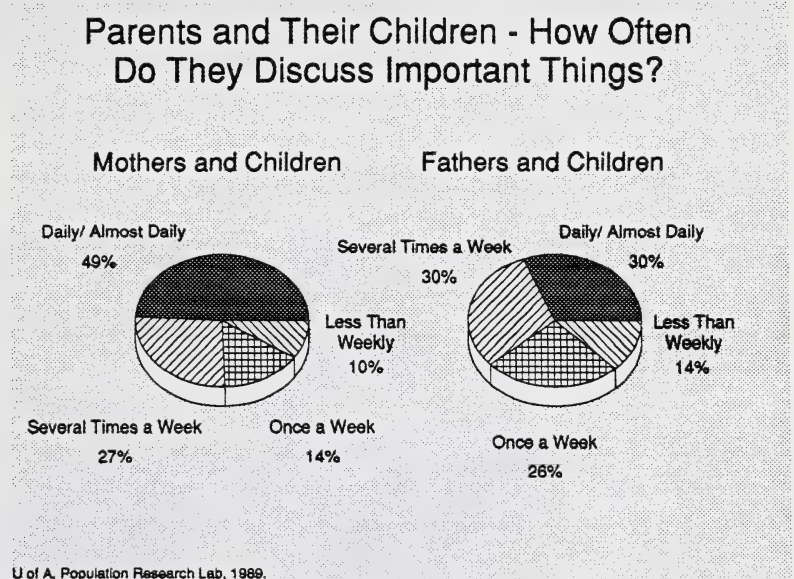
Close contact with the children is usually shared between the parents. Couples living with their children under 18 years old were asked how often they laugh with their children and discuss important things with them. Only families with children under 18 years old were included. Most mothers (85%) and fathers (73%) laugh with their children daily or almost daily.

Figure 42



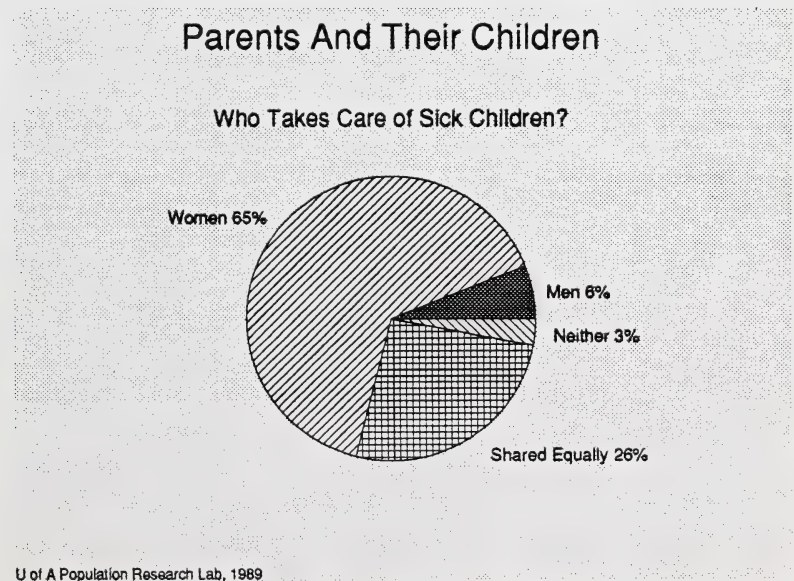
Most mothers (76%) and fathers (60%) discuss important things with their children at least several times a week.

Figure 43



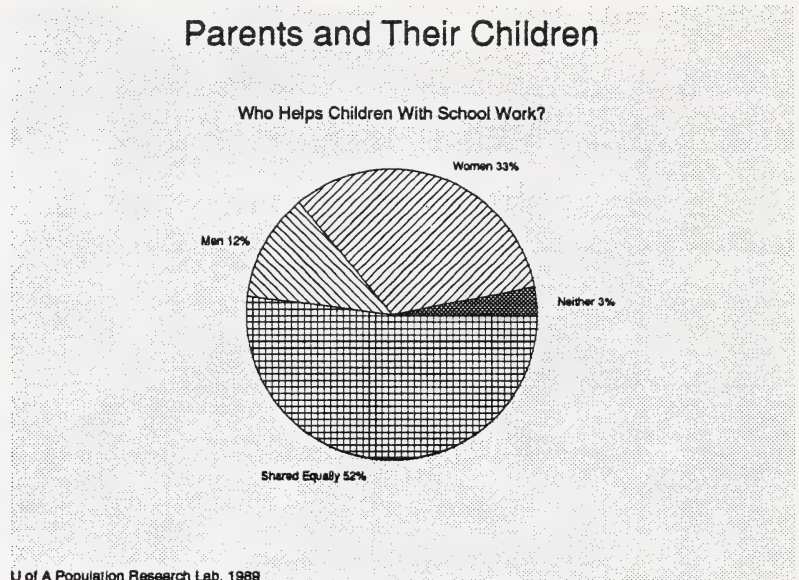
An important issue which has arisen with the increase in families with both parents in the workforce, is the question of who stays home with a sick child. Families who are living in a couple relationship with children under 12 were asked what they do. Women usually stay home to care for a sick child (65%), while 26 percent of respondents say this responsibility is "shared equally".

Figure 44



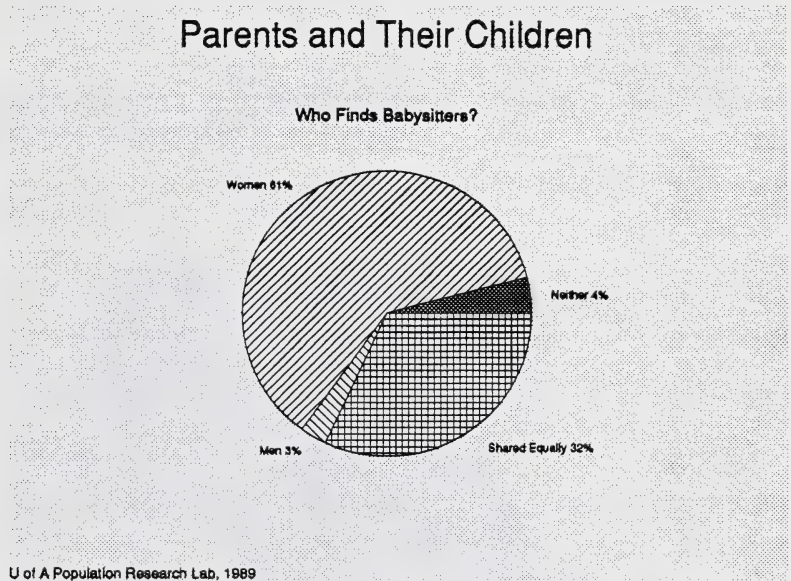
Helping children with schoolwork is generally shared equally in over half of Alberta families (52%). In another third of families (33%) the mother usually helps the children with school work.

Figure 45



Arranging for babysitters remains largely the job of women (61%), but in nearly a third of families, it is shared equally (32%).

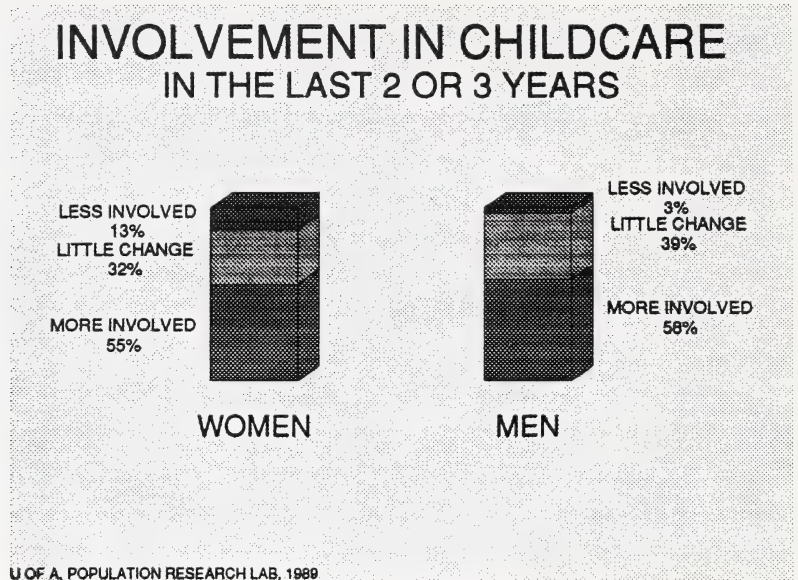
Figure 46



More Involvement in Child Care

Couples with children under 12 were asked about changes in their involvement in child care in the last 2 or 3 years. More than half of both men (58%) and women (55%) said that they had become more involved in child care in the last few years.

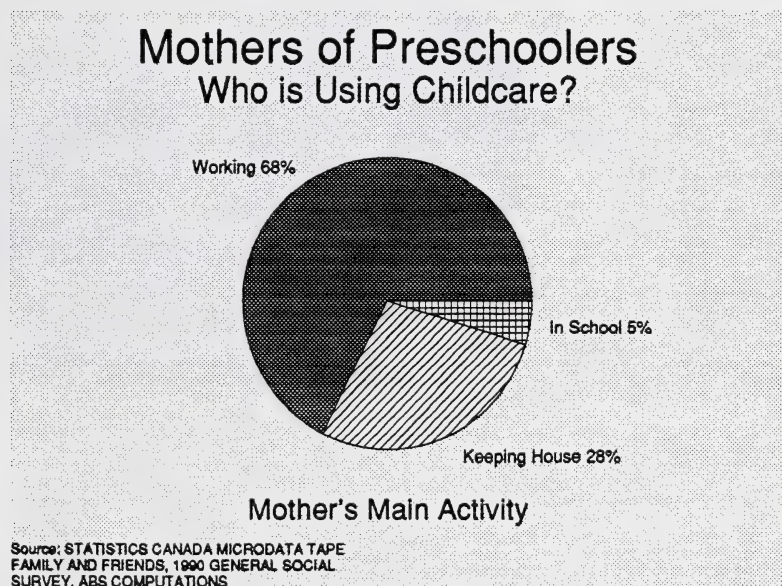
Figure 47



Use of Child Care

Of those families with children 6 years of age and under, 13% use government regulated day care or family day home services; 45% have some form of informal child care arrangement; and 42% have one parent at home providing care for one or more preschool children²³. Of the families with preschoolers who are using child care on a regular basis, 68% have mothers who are primarily working; 28% have mothers who are primarily keeping house; and 5% have mothers who are continuing their education. Of those mothers of preschoolers who consider that their main activity is working, about two-thirds use child care on a regular basis. Of those mothers who consider themselves to be primarily keeping house, 26% use child care regularly.

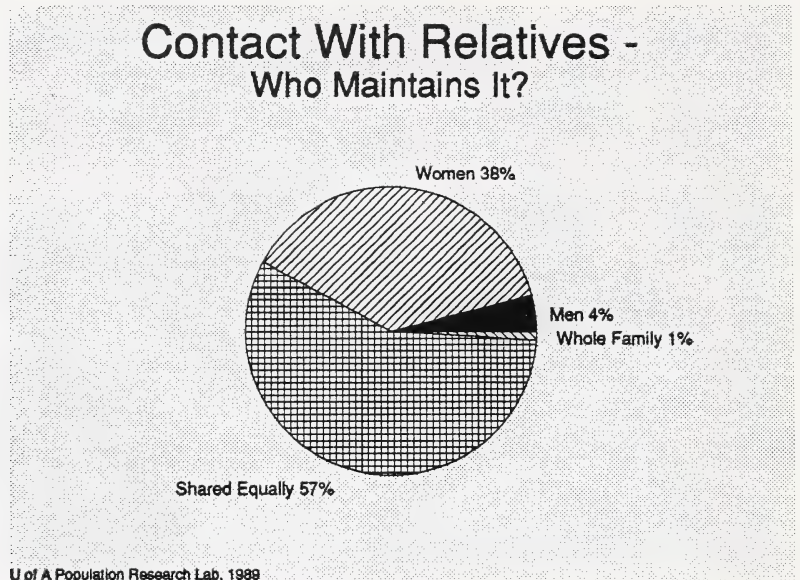
Figure 48



Maintaining Contact With Relatives

The majority of men and women (57%) report that the responsibility for maintaining contact with relatives is "shared equally" with their spouse. However, in 38 percent of the families, the women are primarily responsible.

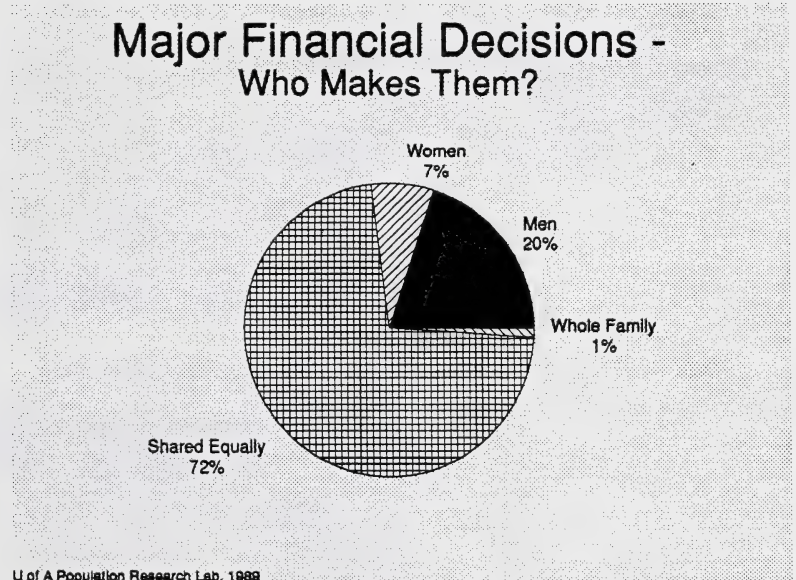
Figure 49



Financial Decisions

When it comes to major financial decisions, 72% of the men and women report that both spouses play an equal part in decision making. However, men are usually responsible for the major financial decisions in 20 percent of the families, women are in 7% of the families.

Figure 50



Launching from the Nest

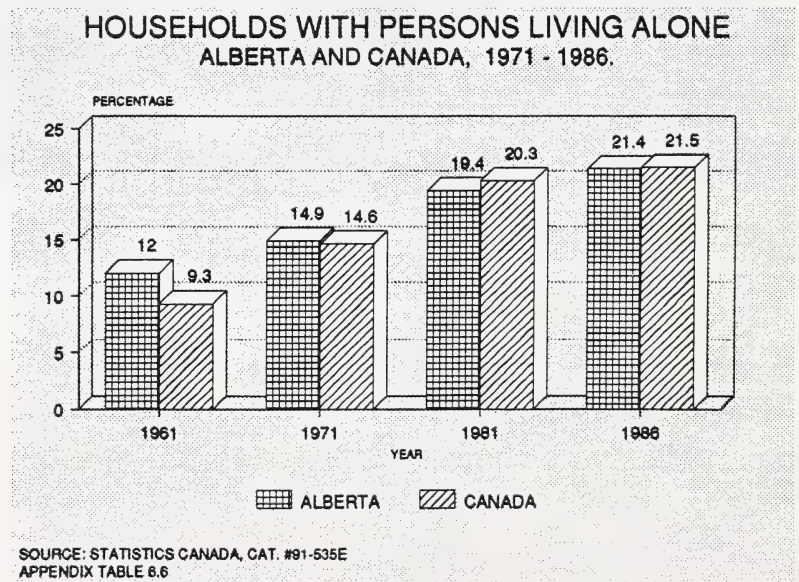
"Recent decades have brought unanticipated turns in family composition and living arrangements among both the young and the old. More elderly Canadians are living alone, while until recently, the young have been leaving their parents' homes at increasingly early ages."

- Monica Boyd and Edward T. Pryor, *Canadian Social Trends*, 1989⁵⁸

More Albertans are Living Alone

The proportion of Alberta households with people living alone has increased from 12% of all households in 1961 to 21.4% of households in 1986. Canada as a whole has had a similar increase in lone person households, from 9.3% in 1961 to 21.5% in 1986. This dramatic change is the result of more and more people - young adults, separated or divorced adults, and seniors, aspiring for autonomy, and choosing to maintain their own households⁵⁹. Favourable economic conditions stimulated the supply of single-person housing, such as apartments and single person dwellings, which also encouraged people to live alone⁶⁰.

Figure 51



The proportion of family households has steadily declined throughout the same period. However, the vast majority of Albertans, 81%, live in families²⁹. The families referred to here are economic families, which means that they live in a household of two or more people who are related to each other by blood, marriage, or adoption. Common-law couples are included as married in this data.

Young Adults Leaving Home at Younger Ages

Demographers have been tracking the trend of young Canadian adults leaving home at earlier and earlier ages³⁰. Cross sectional data show the trend toward young Albertan adults leaving home at younger ages. Those who are now between 18 and 29 and no longer living at home, left home, on average, at 19.3 years old for men and 18.7 for women. The generation which is now between 45 and 64, left their parents' home at 20.5 for men and at an average of 19 years old for women.

Table 7

Age at Leaving Their Parents' Home - Alberta, 1990

Current Age	Men	Women
18 - 29	19.3	18.7
30 - 44	19.7	18.9
45 - 64	20.5	19.0

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1990,
Family and Friends Microdata File.

Reasons for Leaving Home Changing

There are also changes in the reasons for leaving home. Those who are now in the 45 to 64 year age range most often left home to take a job or to get married. Men were more likely to leave their parents' home to take a job at an average age of 20, and women were more likely to leave their parents' home for marriage at an average age of 19. Those who are currently in the 18 to 29 year old age range, who have left home, have most often left to be independent or to attend school.

Table 8

Main Reason for Moving Out of Parents' Home

Current Age	18 - 29		30 - 44		45 - 64	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
To get married	3%	23%	15%	33%	27%	43%
To take a job	15%	15%	29%	13%	35%	22%
To attend school	27%	24%	19%	18%	18%	13%
To be independent	44%	34%	29%	25%	9%	10%
Other Reason	13%	5%	9%	12%	3%	12%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1990, Family and Friends Microdata File.

Trend Reversing: More Young Adults May be Staying Home

The long term trend toward moving out at younger ages, reversed for both Alberta and Canada in the 1986 Census, with more young adults staying at home or returning home in 1986 than in 1981.

In Alberta, in 1990, of those who were 20 to 24 and neither married nor in a common-law relationship, 53% of the males and 33% of the females were living in their parents' homes.

Those who are living alone tend to have higher personal incomes than those living at home, even though the majority of young adults living at home state that their main activity is working.

Young adult children are more likely to remain at home longer if they are from lone parent families.

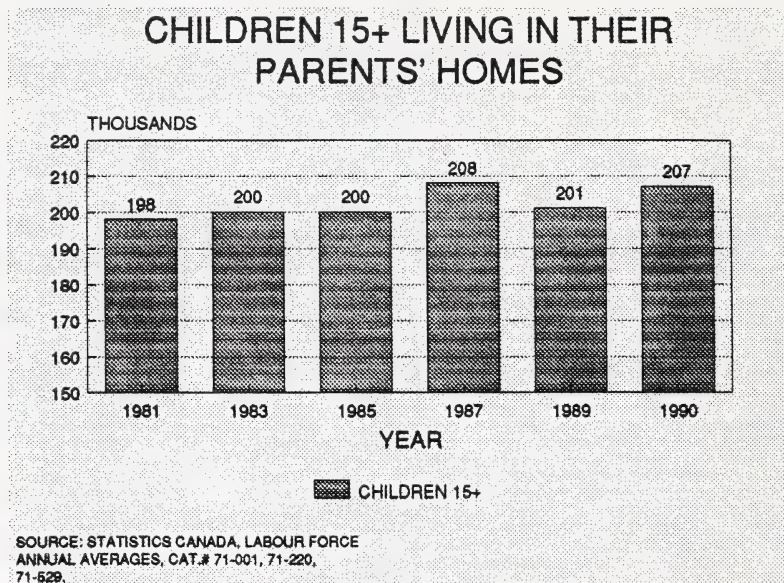
Table 9

Characteristics of Young Unmarried Adults 20 - 29 Living in Their Parents' Home, and Living Alone

	Living at Home		Living Alone	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
<u>Main Activity</u>	%	%	%	%
Working	84	84	78	65
Looking for Work	--	--	10	5
Student	12	16	8	24
Disabled	4	--	3	--
Keeping House	--	--	--	6
Total	100	100	100	100
<u>Personal Income</u>				
> \$10,000	20	32	17	12
\$10,000 - \$19,999	34	52	30	43
\$20,000 - \$39,999	46	16	43	45
\$40,000 +	--	--	12	--
Total	100	100	100	100
<u>Parents' Marital Status</u>				
Lone Parent Home	10,000	4,000	--	--
	22%	25%		
Two Parent Home	37,000	12,000	--	--
	78%	75%		
Total	100	100	--	--

The Labour Force Survey provides data on all children 15+ living in their parents' homes. There were more young adults living at home in 1990 than in 1981, although the trend is not uniformly up³⁹. The permanence of this trend is questionable, and improved economic conditions for young adults could reverse the growing tendency of young adults to stay in their parents' home⁴⁰.

Figure 52



Family Work Patterns

"At present, a revolutionary readjustment is in progress. A new alignment for the sex division of labour is being worked out. The entrance of women into wage-earning occupations gives them a stronger economic position, and hence the terms of the marriage relation are being revised."

- J.E. Cutler, *Durable Monogamous Wedlock*, 1916¹⁵

"As a society, Canada has not yet adjusted to the fact that the majority of couples now are two-earner couples. This leaves parents to cope with childcare in a situation when the care of its youngest members is only grudgingly and inconsistently recognized as an issue which affects the entire society."

Margrit Eichler, *Families in Canada Today*, 1988¹⁹

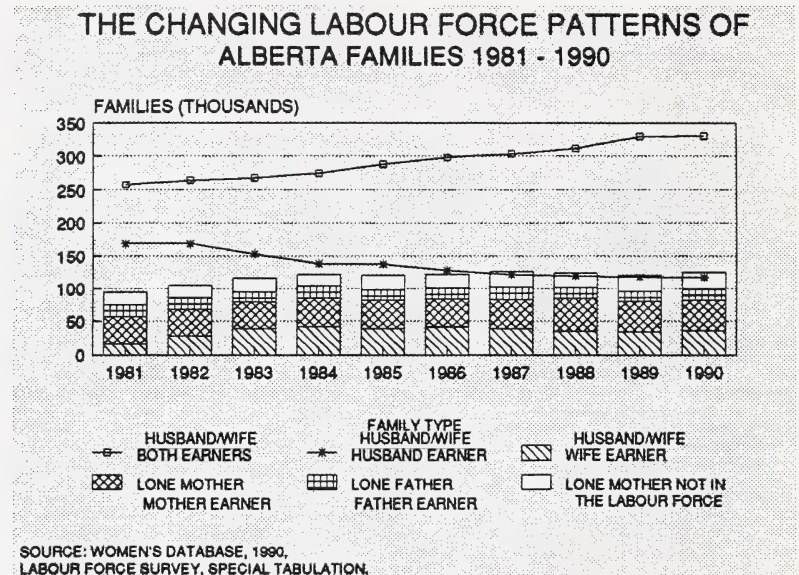
One of the most significant economic and social changes over the past 50 years has been the increased participation of women in the labour force. From 1921 to 1990, female participation in the labour force increased from 13.2% to 63.8%. During this same period the participation of men in the labour force actually declined from 90.2% to 80.6%.

Today, Alberta has the highest labour force participation rate in Canada (72.1%), as well as the highest labour force participation rate for women in the country (63.8%)²⁰. It should be noted that these figures include employment where the workplace is in the home and includes the 2% of women who do unpaid family work, such as farming or helping in the family business.

Changing Labour Force Patterns

The trend toward changing labour force patterns in Alberta families has continued in the last decade, from 1981 to 1990. By 1990, over 50% of Alberta families were two earner families. The total number of families that are lone parent families, or families supported only by the wife in the work force, exceeds the number of families that are supported by the husband only. Both the number and the proportion of families supported only by the husband have declined dramatically in the last 10 years.

Figure 53



The 1990 information shows that there are about 331,000 husband/wife, two earner families where the husband is employed and the wife is also in the labour force. There are about 116,000 husband/wife families which fit the "traditional" family, where the husband is employed and the wife is not in the labour force. There are about 35,000 husband/wife families with the opposite pattern, where the wife is in the labour force, but the husband is not in the labour force or is unemployed.

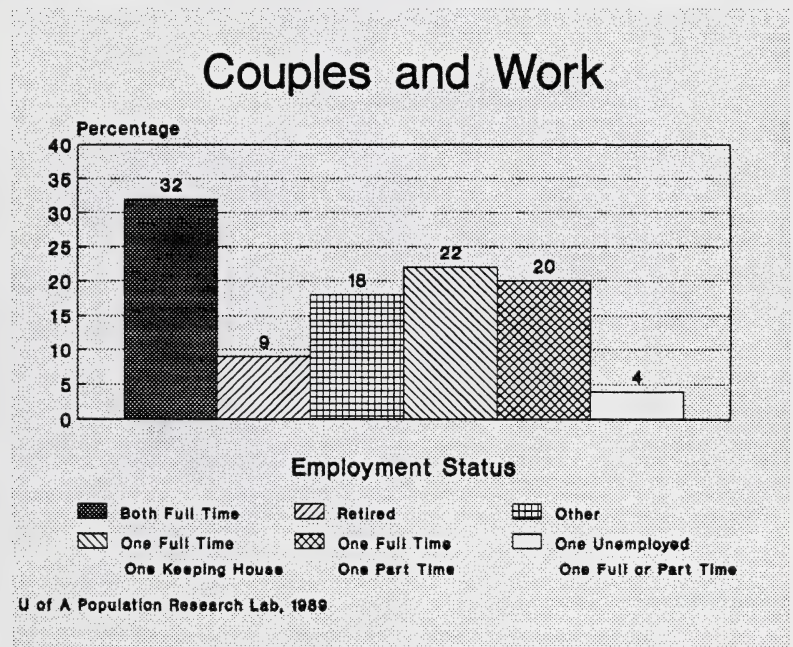
There are also 17,000 lone father families and 47,000 lone mother families where the lone parent is in the labour force. There are about 26,000 lone mother families where the lone mother is not in the labour force. Lone parent families in this data include children of any age, even adults.

This data includes common-law couples as husband/wife families, and includes families with or without children or other relatives. The focus is on the labour force patterns of husbands, wives, and lone parents, regardless of whether other family members are in the labour force.

Couples and Work

In nearly one third of Alberta's husband-wife families (32%), including both married and common-law couples, both partners work full-time. In nearly 20 percent of couples, one works full-time and the other part-time. One works full-time and one keeps house in about 22% of couples. Both are retired in 9 percent of couples. One is unemployed and one working in 4% of couples. The diversity of family work patterns is emphasized by the fact that 18% of couples have other patterns, including one partner being a student or disabled and the other working or unemployed, or both working part-time.

Figure 54



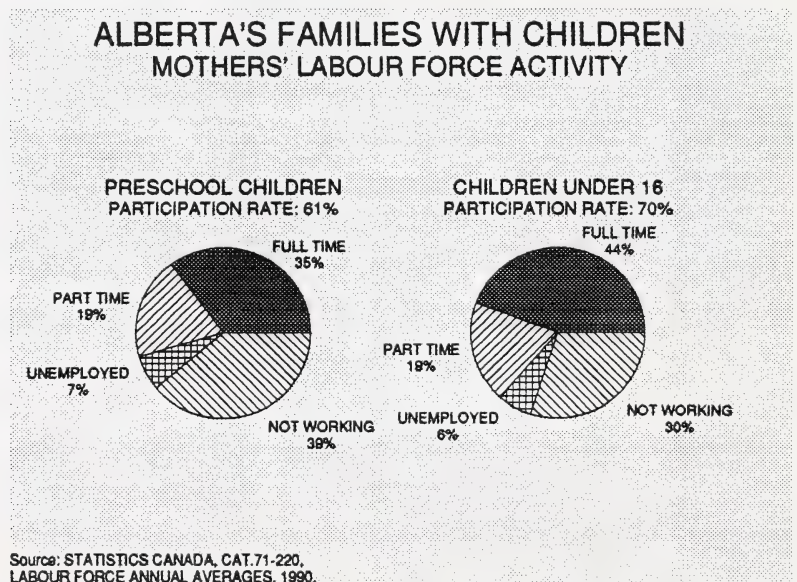
Mothers In The Labour Force

Although the majority of mothers, both of preschoolers and of all children under 16, are in the labour force, only a minority work full-time: 44% of mothers of children under 16, and 35% of mothers of preschoolers.

In 1990, 44% of all mothers with children under 16 years of age living at home were working on a full-time basis. 19% were working part-time, and 6% were unemployed, giving a total of 70% of mothers in the labour force. Again, a reminder that these figures include employment where the workplace is in the home, and include the 2% of women who do unpaid family work such as farming or helping in the family business.

In families with preschool children under 6, 35% of mothers were employed full-time and a total of 61% of mothers of preschoolers were in the labour force (1990). In 39% of these families, the mother was not in the labour force.

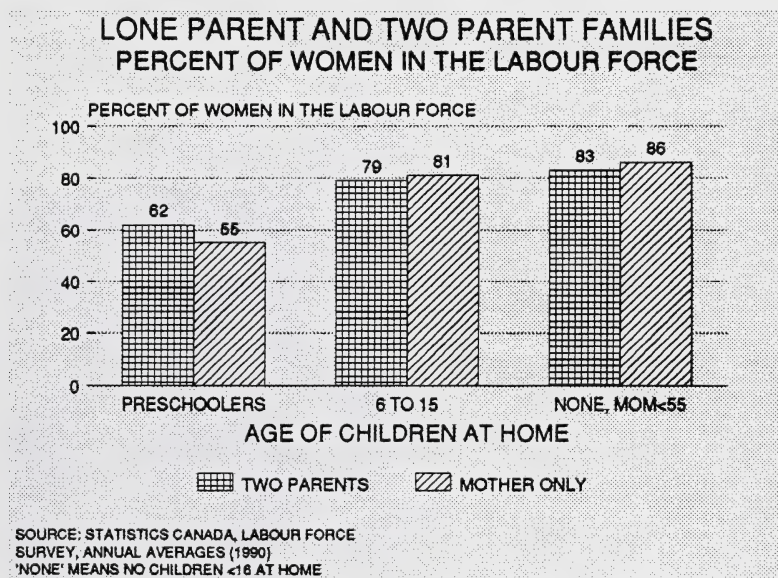
Figure 55



Working Patterns of Mothers in Two Parent and Lone Parent Families

The working patterns of lone parent and two parent mothers are very similar. They are least likely to be in the labour force when their children are preschool aged. 62% of mothers with preschool children in two parent families are in the workforce, 35% are working full time. Similarly 55% of lone parent mothers of preschoolers are in the labour force, 33% working full time. Again, these definitions include the 2% of women who do unpaid family work, as noted previously.

Figure 56

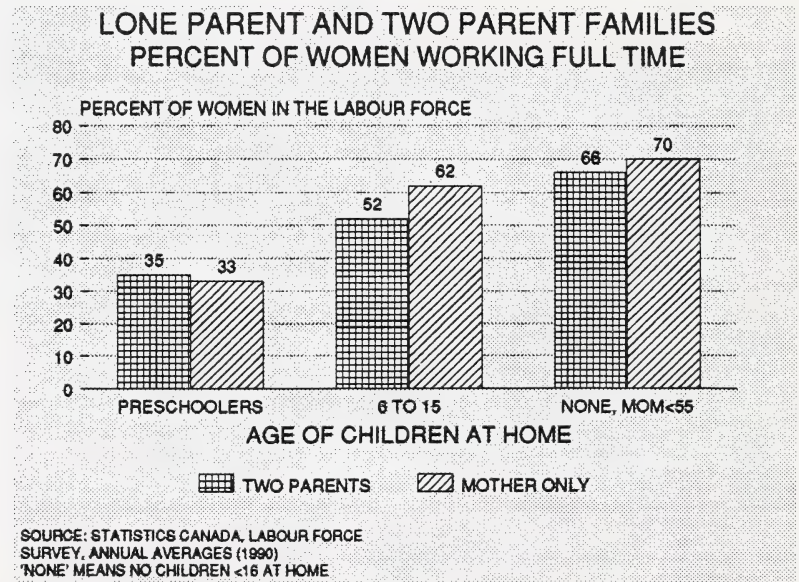


A very high proportion of mothers who have at least one child 6 to 15 years old at home, and no preschoolers, are working. 79% of mothers in two parent families with children in this age range are in the labour force; 52% working full time. Again these figures include employment where the workplace is in the home, as well as unpaid family work such as helping with the family business. Over 81% of lone parent mothers of 6 to 15 year olds are in the workforce, and over 62% are working full time.

Women under 55 who have no children under 16 at home are the most likely to be in the labour force and to be working full time.

Women over 55 with no children under 16 at home are the least likely to be working.

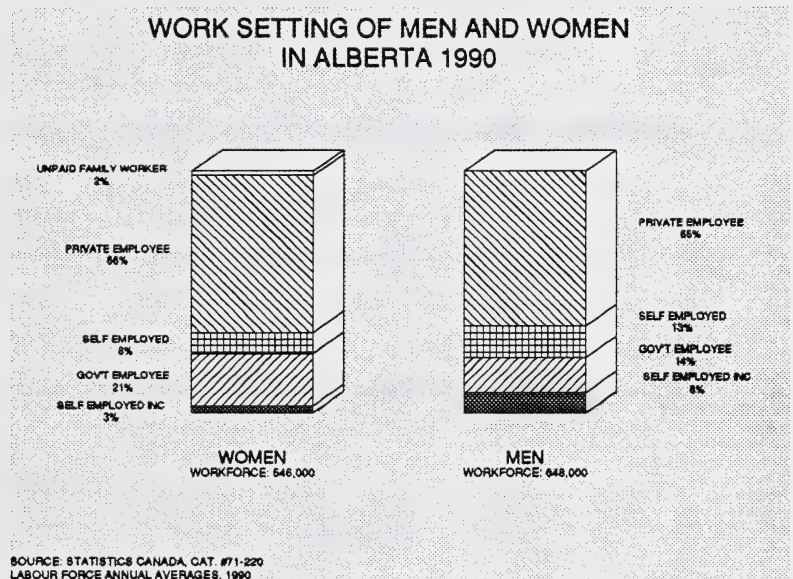
Figure 57



Work Settings of Men and Women

The majority of both men (65%) and women (66%) work as employees of private sector businesses. About 2% of women work as unpaid family workers, either on the farm or in the family business. No men reported doing unpaid family work. Women are more likely to work for government and less likely to be self-employed than men, in either incorporated or unincorporated self-employment settings.

Figure 58



Employment and Education

Women who have higher levels of education are much more likely to be in the labour force and much less likely to be unemployed than women with less education. The proportion of women who are either working or unemployed and looking for work (participation rate) ranges from 24.5% of women whose level of education is grades 0 through 8, to 78.8% for women with a university degree. The pattern for men is similar, with a 51.9% participation rate for those with grades 0 through 8 and a 90.3% participation rate for those with university degrees.

Table 10

Labour Force Participation Rates by Level of Education - Alberta, 1990

	Level of Education					Total
	Grades 0-8	High School	Some Post Secondary	Post Secondary Diploma	University Degree	
Women (%)	24.5	62.1	65.9	76.1	78.8	63.8
Men (%)	51.9	79.6	79.3	89.2	90.3	80.6

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey,
Microdata Files, 1977-1990. Women's Database,
Alberta Career Development and Employment, 1991*.

Table 11

Unemployment Rates by Level of Education - Alberta, 1990

	Level of Education					Total
	Grades 0-8	High School	Some Post Secondary	Post Secondary Diploma	University Degree	
Women (%)	13.3	8.5	7.1	5.5	4.7	7.3
Men (%)	9.4	9.0	6.5	5.2	2.7	6.8

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey,
Microdata Files, 1977-1990. Women's Database,
Alberta Career Development and Employment, 1991*.

Family Income

"The overall well-being of families (and of persons who live alone) is highly, although surely not solely, dependent upon their economic well-being. The family and individual sense of belonging, worth, and pride—psycho-social well-being—is also an important, closely related factor."

- Emily Nett, *Canadian Families Past and Present*, 1988⁹

Table 12

Family Income - Alberta 1981 to 1990*

Family Type	Distribution of All Family Types (%)		Average Family Income in Constant (1990) Dollars (\$)			Change 1981 to 1990
	1981	1990	1981	1986	1990	%
All economic families of 2 or more persons	68.4	68.1	57,000	52,000	52,000	-9
Elderly Families (Head 65 and over)	6.5	8.1	32,000	35,000	38,000	+20
Married couples only	4.6	5.9	28,000	31,000	34,000	+21
Non-Elderly Families (Head under 65)	61.9	60.0	60,000	54,000	54,000	-11
Married couples, only, Total	13.5	15.8	55,000	51,000	52,000	-6
One earner	2.7	2.8	45,000	35,000	42,000	-6
Two earners	10.5	12.1	59,000	56,000	57,000	-4
Two-parent families with children under 18, Total ^{***}	36.2	29.2	61,000	59,000	57,000	-7
One earner	8.8	5.3	49,000	43,000	43,000	-13
Two earners	18.2	16.9	59,000	59,000	56,000	-5
Three or more earners	8.9	6.8	79,000	76,000	72,000	-10
Married couples with children ^{***} 18 or over or other relatives, Total	6.0	6.1	81,000	69,000	77,000	-5
Lone-parent families with children under 18, Total ^{**}	3.0	5.5	31,000	26,000	24,000	-23
Female lone-parent families, Total	2.7	4.8	29,000	24,000	21,000	-25
No earner	0.4	1.0	10,000	15,000	13,000	+27
One earner	1.4	2.9	26,000	21,000	21,000	-17
All other families	3.2	3.4	54,000	43,000	41,000	-23
Unattached Individuals	31.6	31.9	25,000	22,000	24,000	-5
Elderly	6.6	6.7	15,000	15,000	17,000	+14
Non-elderly	25.0	25.3	28,000	24,000	25,000	-8

Cautionary Note: This data is based on the Survey of Consumer Finances, and is therefore not as reliable as census data - see Appendix A for details.

* Since not all sub-categories of family unit types are presented, subtotals may not add to indicated totals.

** With single children. Children 18 years of age and over and/or other relatives may also be present.

*** Children less than 18 years of age are not present but may include children 18 years of age and over.

Family Income in Alberta

The average family income in Alberta dropped during the mid-1980's, when real income (income adjusted for inflation) is considered⁴. The average real family income has stabilized somewhat since then, but on average, families are not as well off as they were toward the end of the boom years in 1980 and early 1981.

Family Income In 1990

The **most common** Alberta families today are two earner households with children (16.9%) and two earner couples with no children at home (12.1%). The average family income of all Alberta families of two or more people is \$52,000 (1990).

The families with the highest average incomes are two parent families with children and three or more earners (\$72,000), and married couples living with adult children or other relatives (\$77,000). The next highest average incomes are in married couple families with two earners with children at home (\$56,000) and without children at home (\$57,000). Earners are those who have income from employment or from self-employment.

The families with the lowest incomes are female lone parent families with no earners (\$13,000) and elderly unattached individuals (\$17,000).

Family Income Changes 1980-1990

The proportion of two parent families with children who rely on one income has fallen considerably - from 8.8% of all family types in 1981 to 5.3% of all family types in 1990 (52,000 families). The average income of two parent families with one earner fell from \$49,000 to \$43,000 between 1981 and 1990, when inflation is taken into consideration.

The average real family income of married couples without children, when they rely on one earner, fell from \$45,000 to \$42,000 between 1981 and 1990.

Income of Lone Parent Families

The average real family income of lone parent families headed by women, with no income earners, has increased over the period, showing that the social safety net has kept pace with inflation. However, the average family income of a female lone parent family with children under 16 and no earner is still less than one quarter of the income of the average two parent family with children (\$13,000 as compared to \$57,000). The average real family income of a female lone parent family with no earner (\$13,000) is about 61% of the average income of a female lone parent family with one earner (\$21,000). The income gap between lone parent families with no earners or one earner has narrowed slightly over the past 10 years, partly because of the lower incomes of lone parent families with one or more earners in 1990, as compared to 1981.

The proportion of female lone parent families with no earners has increased from 0.4% to 1% of all families, whereas the proportion of female lone parent families overall has increased from 3% of all families to 4.8% of all families. Lone parent families headed by men have also increased slightly, from 0.5% of all families to 0.7% of all families.

Lone parent families with children 18 or over are included in "all other families", along with groups of siblings or other related people. The average real family income of these other families is \$41,000 in 1990, and "other families" have increased from 3.2% to 3.4% of all family types over the decade.

Income of Elderly Families

In contrast to other family types, elderly unattached individuals and elderly couples without children at home have had an increase in average real family income of about 20% over the decade. However, the average income of elderly, unattached individuals is still only 69% of the average income of non-elderly, unattached people. Similarly, the income of elderly couples without children is about 66% of non-elderly, married couples without children. It is important to note that this income data does not take into account the many in-kind benefits from government programs, or the preferential income tax benefits provided to seniors. Thus, seniors typically have higher levels of **disposable** income than do non-seniors with similar levels of average family income.

Non-elderly unattached individuals, under 65, are, on average, worse off in 1990 than they were in 1981.

Summary of Changes in Family Income

In summary, almost all families with children have lower average real family incomes in 1990 than they did in 1981. Married couple families that rely on one wage earner, and lone parent families that rely on one wage earner, have had the largest drops in average real family income. Even families with two or three earners have not achieved the income level of comparable families in 1981.

The only groups whose real family incomes are higher in 1990 than in 1981 are elderly families, elderly unattached individuals, and lone parent families headed by women with no wage earners.

Average Income of Alberta Families Compared to All Canadian Families

Alberta's average family income in 1990 is slightly above the average Canadian family income. Albertans also have the third highest wages in Canada, and the fourth highest per capita income in 1990.

How can we then explain the drop in family income experienced by Alberta families, if they are still relatively well-off compared to other Canadian families?

During the recession in the early 1980's, the average real family income of families across Canada fell. Since the early 80's, incomes were steadily recovering, until 1989. In 1990, the average Canadian family income fell again. In 1990, across Canada, married couple families without children, married couple families with children who relied on one income earner, and lone parent families had somewhat lower family incomes, on average, than a decade earlier, in 1980⁴. This is a dramatic contrast to the steadily increasing average real family income throughout the previous two decades of the 1960's and the 1970's⁴.

In 1980, Alberta's families enjoyed an average family income that was 16% higher than the average of all Canadian families (\$57,845 for Alberta families compared to \$49,843 for all Canadian families, in 1990 dollars). Alberta's strong economic growth from 1973 to 1979 had far exceeded the Canadian rate of growth, leading to a higher standard of living for Albertans⁴.

Table 13

Average Income of Families

	Family Income		Family Income in 1990 \$	
	1980	1990	1980	1990
Alberta Families	32,506	51,985	57,845	51,985
All Canadian Families	28,009	51,633	49,843	51,633
Alberta Average Family Income as a proportion of the Canadian Average Family Income	116%	100.7%	116%	100.7%

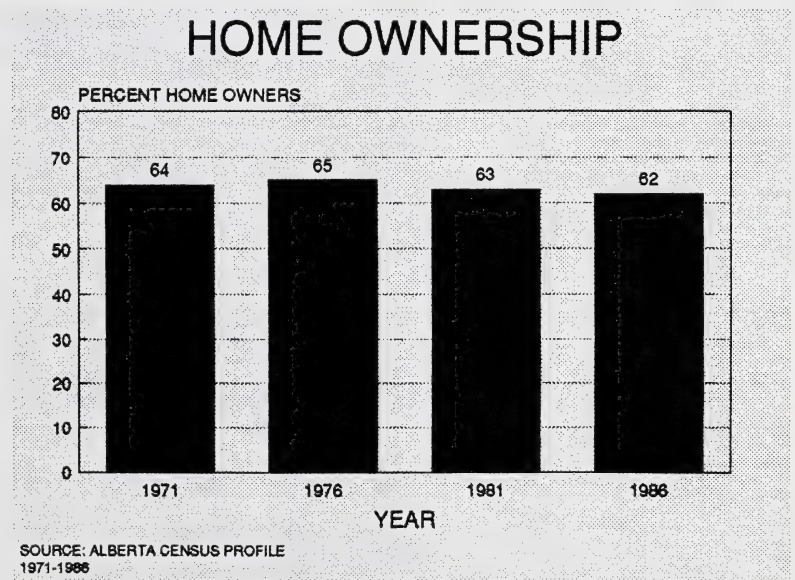
Source: Statistics Canada, #13-207 (1990), and Household Surveys Division, unpublished data.

However, when the fortunes of the oil and gas industry changed and Canada experienced the recession of 1981 to 1984, Alberta experienced a more severe and prolonged recession than in Canada as a whole. Businesses and families were affected by the economic and social costs of this economic variability. Business failures and unemployment increased, salaries and wages dropped, real estate markets fell, and family incomes dropped³⁴. Family incomes, in both Canada and Alberta, have been recovering since then. However, while Alberta's average family income has recovered to the same level as the average Canadian income, it has not returned to the level achieved during the boom cycle in 1980. As a result, Alberta families have experienced more of a change in income than other Canadian families.

Home Ownership

Home ownership increased during the early 1970's, from 64% of households to 65%. However, from 1976 to 1986 there was a slight decline to 62%, in the proportion of Albertans owning their own homes.

Figure 59

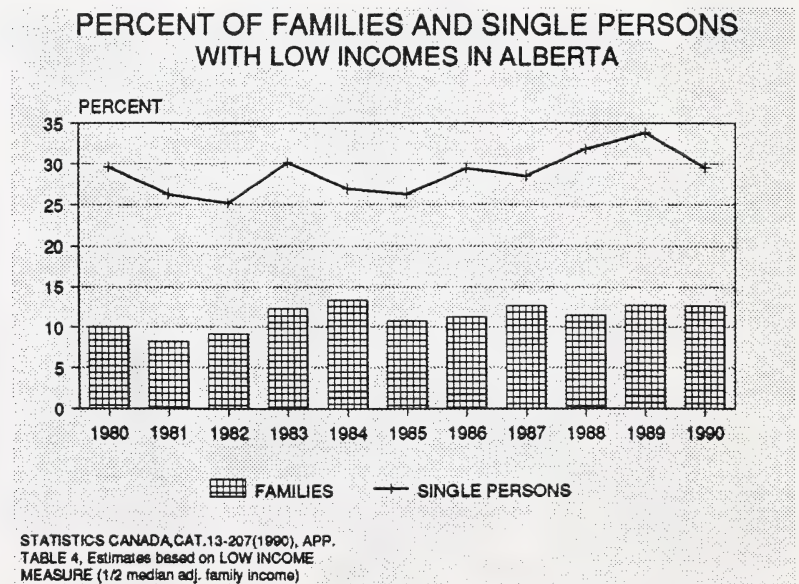


Low Income in Alberta

There is really no objective scientific basis for determining a 'poverty line'. However, Statistics Canada, after a long review of low income cut-offs, has introduced a new Low-Income Measure. The Low Income Measure is one half of the adjusted median family income, where "adjusted" means that they have taken into consideration the number of adults and children in the family, and whether it is a single parent or two parent family. In 1990, the low income measure for a single adult was \$11,838; for a couple with two children, \$23,676; and for a single parent with one child, \$16,573. The low income measure is not intended as a measure of poverty.

In 1990, the majority of Albertans in 1990 had incomes above the low income measure criterion, including both families (87% above) and unattached persons (71.5% above). However, 12.6% of families, and 29.5% of unattached persons, had low incomes in 1990. The highest proportion of families with low incomes in the decade was 13.3% in 1984, and the lowest was 8.2% of families in 1981².

Figure 60



Low Income in Alberta

Between 1981 and 1990, the number of families with children whose family incomes were below the low income measure doubled, from about 28,000 families to about 61,000 families. In 1990, about half of the families with children that had incomes below the low income measure were lone parent families, and about half were two parent families.

Table 14

Low Income - Alberta 1981 to 1990*

Family Type	Incidence of Low Income (%)		Distribution of All Family Types 1990		Distribution of Low Income Family Types (%)	
	1981	1990	Below LIM***	Above LIM***	1981	1990
All economic families of 2 or more persons	8.2	12.6	83,493	577,873	40.4	47.7
Elderly Families (Head 65 and over)	15.9	5.9	4,637	73,812	7.4	2.6
Married couples only	14.6	4.7	2,704	55,036	4.8	1.5
Non-Elderly Families (Head under 65)	7.4	13.5	78,856	504,061	32.9	45.0
Married couples, only, Total	5.7	8.5	13,089	140,703	5.5	7.5
One earner	14.8	16.7	4,511	22,576	2.7	2.6
Two earners	2.3	4.2	4,914	112,483	4.7	2.6
Two-parent families with children under 18, Total**	6.6	10.8	30,562	253,192	17.3	17.5
One earner	12.1	25.1	12,996	38,759	7.7	7.4
Two earners	5.0	7.7	12,601	151,742	6.6	7.2
Three or more earners	2.9	5.8	3,844	62,691	1.9	2.2
Married couples with children*** 18 or over or other relatives, Total	2.7	1.2	718	58,506	1.2	0.4
Lone-parent families with children under 18, Total**	31.1	56.5	30,153	23,201	6.7	17.2
Female lone-parent families, Total	34.9	60.7	28,285	18,333	6.7	16.2
No earner	100.0	96.0	9,273	384	2.8	5.3
One earner	27.2	57.7	16,517	12,086	2.8	9.4
All other families	10.1	13.2	4,334	28,459	2.3	2.5
Unattached Individuals	26.3	29.5	91,617	218,772	59.6	52.3
Elderly	56.1	38.6	25,010	39,846	26.7	14.3
Non-elderly	18.4	27.1	66,607	178,926	33.0	38.0

* Since not all sub-categories of family unit types are presented, subtotals may not add to indicated totals.

** With single children. Children 18 years of age and over and/or other relatives may also be present.

*** Children less than 18 years of age are not present but may include children 18 years of age and over.

*** LIM - Low Income Measure.

Source: Statistics Canada, Household Surveys Division,
Survey of Consumer Finances, Unpublished Data.

More Low Income Families With Children

In 1990, there were nearly 61,000 families with children under 18 who had family incomes below the low income measure. There were nearly 31,000 two parent families with children, and over 30,000 lone parent families with children whose family income was below the low income measure.

The families with children that are most likely to have low incomes are female lone parent families with no earner. About 96% of these families have incomes below the low income measure.

About 58% of female lone parent families with one earner have low incomes. About 12,000 of the 28,000 women raising their children as lone parents with one earner in the family, have family incomes above the low income measure.

About 25% of two parent families with dependent children and one income earner have incomes below the low income measure.

Of married couple families with two income earners, there are nearly 8% of those with children who have low incomes, and 4% of those without children who have low incomes.

More Unattached Persons Below the Low Income Measure

The proportion of unattached persons with incomes below the low income measure rose from about 26% in 1981 to 29.5% in 1990, from 70,000 individuals to nearly 92,000 individuals. The proportion of elderly unattached individuals with low incomes fell from 56% to about 39%. The proportion of unattached individuals who were less than 65 years old, who had low incomes, increased from 18 to 27%.

Fewer Elderly Low Income Families

The proportion of elderly married couples whose family incomes were below the low income measure fell from about 15% to about 5% between 1981 and 1990. Similarly the proportion of all elderly families, with incomes below the low income measure, fell from 16% to 6% in the same period.

How Albertans Spend Their Income

In 1990, the biggest expenditures of households in Edmonton and Calgary are the costs of owning or renting (including property taxes paid by owners), at 17% in Calgary and 15% in Edmonton. Transportation, including expenses for owning and operating a car and/or for the use of public transportation, is the next largest expenditure item, at 13 to 14%, or about \$6,000 per household. Food, including both home prepared and restaurant food is the next largest expenditure, at about \$5,650. The largest item in household budgets, more than food, shelter, or transportation, is personal taxes, at 19% of household income. This does not include property taxes, which are included in the housing costs category, or GST, which had not yet been introduced in 1990 when this survey was conducted.

Table 15
1990 Average Household Expenditures

	Calgary		Edmonton	
Average Income Before Tax	45,000	100%	46,000	100%
Average number of people in household	2.46		2.60	
Percentage of Households	%		%	
Homeowner	55		63	
Car or truck owner	85.4		87.9	
With children under 5 years	14.9		17.1	
With children 5 to 15 years	22.5		26.3	
With children 16 and 17 years	6.5		6.9	
With adults 18 to 64 years	91.3		88.9	
With adults 65 years and over	16.6		17.7	
One person household	22.4		21.5	
Husband employed full-time	40.1		37.1	
Wife employed full-time	26.3		19.7	
No full-time earners	35.3		39.9	
Average Expenditure On:	\$	%	\$	%
Food	5,670	13	5,617	12
Shelter (costs of owned or rented living quarters)	7,778	17	6,851	15
Water, fuel, electricity	1,206	3	1,194	3
Telephone	652	1	569	1
Furniture and equipment	1,370	3	1,628	4
Clothing	2,497	6	2,807	6
Transportation	5,755	13	6,325	14
Recreation	2,885	6	2,657	6
Tobacco and alcohol	1,298	3	1,128	2
Interest on personal loans	1,323	3	1,128	2
Total Current Consumption	33,087	73	33,071	71
Gifts and Contributions (to persons outside household and charities)	2,064	5	1,838	4
Security (insurance, retirement, pension plan, UIC payments, etc.)	1,914	4	2,071	4
Personal Taxes (Income Tax - Tax Refunds and Credits)	8,735	19	8,957	19

NOTE: Items will not sum to totals since smaller categories are not included in the table, and because percentages are rounded.

Source: Statistics Canada, Detailed Average Expenditure by City,
All Households, Table 54B91, 1990.

Summary

"Families take many forms. We tend to idealize the family form that we know."

- Robyn Smith, in a draft document for the World Council of Churches, cited in *Rebuilding the Nest: A New Commitment to the American Family*, 1990⁴²

The decades of the 70's and 80's were typified by several trends - fewer children per family; rising rates of divorce; rising rates of births outside marriage; increases in the numbers of persons living alone; increases in the number of couples cohabiting without marriage; an increasing proportion of single parent families; and increasing numbers of "blended" families, where one or both of the spouses have been married two or more times.

Family earning patterns have also changed, with more women, more married women, and more mothers of small children now involved in work outside the home. An increasing number of families with children have low incomes.

However, there are indicators that the trends may be moderating - the divorce rate, although still high, has been falling steadily since 1986. The birth rate, while still below replacement level, has risen in Alberta, since its low in 1982, and has shown similar increases in Canada as a whole, and in some Scandinavian countries. The rate of increase in the age at first marriage has slowed. The proportion of single people marrying each year has risen in Alberta for the last two years (1988 and 1989) and is higher than the Canadian average. More young adults are living in their parents' homes, rather than living on their own. More fathers are acknowledging paternity for their children born outside marriage.

Alberta is predicted to have the fastest growth in the number of families of any province in Canada. Even considering the above trends, the majority of Albertans do marry, have children, and remain with their spouse for life. A large majority of young Albertans aspire to this pattern of family life. The majority of divorced people, and couples living common-law, will marry.

Whether living in married, single, common-law, blended, lone parent or other family forms, the quality of family life is significant to a sense of well-being.

There are many indicators that family life is more complex and variable than in the recent past, but there are also many indicators that family life remains of central importance to most Albertans.

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18. *Families in Canada*. Statistics Canada, Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1990. Examines the diversity of family forms and patterns, plus regional and cultural differences in marriage, divorce and cohabitation.
19. *Families in Canada Today*, by Margrit Eichler. Toronto: Gage Educational Publishing, 1988. Brings together much of the available information on Canadian families.

20. *Family History Survey, Preliminary Findings*, by T. Burch. Statistics Canada Cat. #99-955. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1985. Reports data on family changes.
21. *Family Income Inequality in the 1980's*, by R. Love and S. Poulin. Perspectives on Labour and Income, Autumn, 1991. Examines changes in income inequality over the decade and the impact of taxes and government transfer payments on family income.
22. *Family Times 1990*. Edmonton: Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, 1990. Contains interesting articles on family life in Alberta, and on the role of the Council.
23. *Fertility in Canada: Retrospective and Prospective*, by Anatole Romaniuc. Canadian Studies in Population, Vol. 18(2), 1991, pp. 56-77. Attempts to unravel the forces that influence fertility in Canada and to speculate on future fertility rates.
24. *General Social Survey, Preliminary Data, Cycle 5, Family and Friends*. Statistics Canada. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1991. Contains technical details of the survey and some results.
25. *Historical Labour Force Statistics*. Statistics Canada Cat. #71-201. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1990. Shows labour force participation, by age and sex, for Canada and Alberta.
26. *Husband-Wife Family Data, 1989*. Small Area and Administrative Data Division, Statistics Canada. Income by Census Division.
27. *Immigration to Alberta: Decade in Review*. Alberta Career Development and Employment, Immigration and Settlement, 1992. Analysis of immigration to Canada and Alberta, from 1980 to 1990.
28. *Income Distributions by Size in Canada, 1990*. Statistics Canada Cat. #13-207. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1991. Information on family income and low income families.
29. *Labour Force Annual Averages, 1990*. Statistics Canada Cat. #71-220. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1991. Statistics on labour force participation for Canada and Alberta.
30. *Living Arrangement Preferences When Old: An Analysis of the 1989 and 1990 Alberta Surveys*, by Harvey Krahn, David Odynak, and Kathleen Gibbons. A discussion paper prepared for the Demographic Review Secretariat. Edmonton: University of Alberta Population Research Laboratory.

31. *Lone Parent Families and Their Economic Problems: Transitory or Persistent*, by G. Duncan, and W. Rodgers. In *Lone Parent Families: The Economic Challenge*, edited by E. Duskin, Paris: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1990. Discusses the living arrangements and economic status of children, using data from a longitudinal study, and the effects of growing up in lone parent families.
32. *Lone Parenthood: Characteristics and Determinants, Results From the 1984 Family History Survey*, by Ian Pool and Maureen Moore. Statistics Canada, Cat. #99-961. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1986. Examines lone parenthood, from a longitudinal perspective, looking at events and characteristics that are associated with lone parenthood and its duration.
33. *Married and Unmarried Couples: The Tax Question*, by Richard Morrison and Jillian Oderkirk. Canadian Social Trends, Summer, 1991. Describes the average financial impact of taxes and of transfer payments, such as the Child Tax Credit and Guaranteed Income Supplement, by family type and income.
34. *Major Trends in the Changing Canadian Families*, by Jean E. Veevers. In *Continuity and Change in Marriage and Family*, edited by Jean Veevers, 1991. Discusses the eight major trends that characterize changes in the Canadian family, over the last several decades.
35. *Meeting the Need...A Fairer Better System for Albertans, A White Paper on Reform to Alberta's Day Care Program*. Alberta Family and Social Services, March 1990. Contains information on day care in Alberta, and on reforms to the structure of government funding for day care centre services and the training requirements for day care staff.
36. *New Trends in the Family. Demographic Facts and Figures*, by Bali Ram. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1990. Provides information on Canadian and Alberta trends in two income families, divorce, remarriage, childless couples, and persons living outside the family, in independent households.
37. *Overview*, by E. Duskin. In *Lone Parent Families: The Economic Challenge*, edited by E. Duskin, Paris: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1990. Discusses trends and economic and social policy challenges related to lone parent families in the developed world.
38. *Patterns and Change in Canadian Fertility 1971-1988: First Births After Age 30*. Health Reports, Vol. 3, No. 2, 1991. Presents data on first births, by age and marital status of the mother, with some provincial and international comparisons.
39. *Population Projections Alberta, 1987-2016*. Alberta Bureau of Statistics, Alberta Treasury, 1988. Provides projections of Alberta's population change and growth through fertility and migration.

40. *Post Censal Annual Estimates of Population by Marital Status, Age, Sex, and Components of Growth for Canada, Provinces and Territories*, June 1, 1991. Statistics Canada, Cat. #91-210. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1991.
41. *Projections of Households and Families for Canada, Provinces, and Territories, 1989-2011*, by D. Larrivee. Statistics Canada, Catalogue #91-552. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1990. Contains projections for the number of families in Alberta in the future.
42. *Rebuilding the Nest: A New Commitment to the American Family*, edited by D. Blankenhorn, S. Bayne, J. Bethke Elshtain. Milwaukee: Family Service America Publications, 1990, pg. 134. A series of essays by eminent family scholars, from a wide range of perspectives.
43. *Report on the Demographic Situation in Canada, 1991. Current Demographic Analyses*, by Jean Dumas. Ottawa: Minister of Supplies and Services, 1991. Provides information for Canada and Alberta on population growth, marriage, divorce, fertility, mortality, and migration.
44. *The Decline of Real Family Income, 1980 to 1984*, by Colin Lindsay. Canadian Social Trends, Winter, 1986. Shows how Canadian and Albertan real family income declined.
45. *The Family in Canada: Selected Highlights*. Statistics Canada, Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1989. Focuses on family life stages and recent changes.
46. *The Health of the Elderly and the Extent of Family Mutual Aid*, by Louise Lapierre. Health Reports, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1990. Describes the health of the elderly and the support they say they need and the support received and provided by the elderly.
47. *The Impact of Children on the Household Division of Labour and Labour Force Participation: An Empirical Test of a Conceptual Framework*, thesis by Deborah Hurst Usher, University of Alberta, Edmonton, 1991. A thesis about the reports of Albertan men and women about their contributions to household, by age, sex, working status, and the presence of young children.
48. *The Nation: Ethnicity, Immigration and Citizenship*. Statistics Canada, Cat. #93-109. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1989. Contains data for Canada and Alberta on ethnicity, immigration and citizenship.
49. *The Role of Cohabitation in Declining Rates of Marriage*, by L. Bumpass, J. Sweet, and A. Charlin. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 53 (Nov. 1991): 913-927. Discusses cohabitation, in relation to declining marriage rates, marital stability, and attitudes toward marriage and parenthood.

50. *The Population Research Laboratory 1989 Alberta Survey, Changing Family Issues*. Survey Highlights No. 1. Population Research Laboratory, Department of Sociology, University of Alberta, 1990.
51. *The Saturated Family*, by K. Gergen. *Networker*, September/October, 1991. Discusses the impact on families of competing demands on family time, and the increasing complexity and pace of modern life.
52. *Therapeutic Abortions, Canada and the Provinces, 1989*, by S. Wadhwa and J. Strachan. *Health Reports*, Vol. 2, No. e, 1991. Contains data on therapeutic abortions in Canada and Alberta.
53. *Therapeutic Abortions Reported by Hospitals in Alberta, For the Year Ended December 31, 1989*. Health Economics and Statistics, Alberta Health, 1991. Analyzes data on therapeutic abortions in Alberta, by age and marital status.
54. *Toward 2000 Together: A Discussion Paper on Alberta's Economic Options and Choices*. Edmonton: Alberta, Government of Alberta, 1991. Discusses the economic context in Alberta, over the last 20 years, and summarizes the major challenges facing Alberta.
55. *Tracking the Trends: Future Directions for Human Services in Edmonton, Special Feature on Immigrants*. Edmonton: Edmonton Social Planning Council, 1991.
56. *Unmarried Fathers: Perplexing Questions*, by Esther Wattenberg. *Children Today*, March-April 1990. Discusses the limited research on unmarried fathers and related research on unmarried fathers and related policy and social issues.
57. *Women's Database 1990*. Labour Market Information and Research Branch, Alberta Career Development and Employment 1991. Includes data tables on labour force participation, employment, earnings, and education, by age and family status of Alberta men and women.
58. *Young Adults Living in Their Parents' Homes*, by Monica Boyd and Edward T. Pryor. *Canadian Social Trends*, Summer 1989. Describes changes in the proportions and the characteristics of young, unattached adults living in their parents' homes.

Appendix A - Database Descriptions

**Statistics Canada
Microdata File,
Family and Friends,
1990 General
Social Survey**

The majority of the sample was collected by Statistics Canada, by random digit dialling, and included persons 15 years and older. Full time residents of institutions were excluded. The survey included an oversample of the elderly (65 and over) that was drawn from groups rotated out of the Labour Force Survey. When they contacted a private household, they enumerated all the members of the household and then randomly selected and interviewed one member that was 15 or older; or 65 and older for the elderly sample. The Canadian sample was 13,495 individuals, and the Alberta sample used in this report included 1,168 individuals.

All data in this report are from the weighted data file, which represent the province's adult population. There is no perfect way to analyze the data by families, since it is based on individuals. However, we followed the formula described by Pool and Moore, in Bibliographic Reference #32 to estimate the number of families, using the formula "lone parents = lone parents (male and female) + 1/2 married couples (including married, common-law and remarried couples)". This estimate of families is used only in Figure 36, Marital Status of Parents Living With Their Children 18 and Under. The alternative formula "lone parents = lone parents plus wives (including married, common-law, and remarried couples)" was less suited to our needs, due to concerns about the sex differences in the probabilities of living in common-law families with children and in remarried families with children. However, Pool and Moore found the two formulae to give very comparable estimates of the number of families.

Further details on the sample and the socio-demographic profile of the survey respondents are available in Bibliographic Reference #24.

**1989 Alberta Study,
Population Research
Laboratory,
Department of Sociology,
University of Alberta**

The Population Research Laboratory of the University of Alberta interviewed a random sample of 1,190 Albertans on a wide range of current issues, focusing on the theme "Changing Family in Alberta". Two modes of interviewing were used. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in Edmonton and the details on this sample are included below, as the Edmonton Area Survey, 1989. Telephone interviews, using Random Digit Dialling techniques, were used for Calgary and other areas within Alberta. Highlights of the results, the socio-demographic profile of respondents and further technical details are included in Bibliographic References, Numbers 5, 16, and 50, from which this description has been extracted.

**Edmonton Area Study,
1989, Population
Research Laboratory,
Department of Sociology,
University of Alberta**

The Edmonton Area Study involved face to face interviews with a completed sample size of 443 and a 76% response rate. The confidence interval of estimated proportions from the sample would be around 4 to 5 percent, 19 out of 20 times. Within each household selected, one person over 18 was chosen for face-to-face interviewing. Further technical details, a socio-demographic profile of respondents and selected highlights are available in Bibliographic References #5 and 16.

**Survey of
Consumer Finances,
Statistics Canada**

The sample of the Statistics Canada Survey of Consumer Finances represents all families and individuals in Canada, with the exception of i) residents of the Yukon and Northwest Territories, ii) members of households located on Indian Reserves, and iii) inmates of institutions.

Income questionnaires were mailed to sample households prior to the survey. Persons fifteen years old and over were asked to complete the questionnaires prior to the interview. Respondents provided information concerning their labour force experience, detailed income information and demographic data. The overall response rate for Alberta was about 72%. The 1990 sample included about 2,692 Albertans, and the 1981 and 1986 samples were of comparable size.

Estimates for the Survey of Consumer Finances, being based on a sample of households, are somewhat different from those that would have been obtained if the entire population had been included. In the data presented here, the average family income for all Alberta economic families of two persons or more would be accurate within plus or minus \$1,432, 19 times out of 20.

Statistics Canada advises caution in interpreting averages for weighted groups smaller than 4,500 in Alberta, for the years included in the table. This would be groups smaller than 0.7% of Albertans. There is only one group smaller, that is the female, lone parent group, with no earners, in 1981. Therefore, particular caution should be used in interpreting the information on this group. Further technical details on the sample are available in Bibliographic Reference #28.

Appendix B - Definitions

The data in this document reflect the definitions of Statistics Canada and are not necessarily the definitions of the Premier's Council. Where different definitions are used in the document, they will be explained in full in the text.

Common-Law Union	Union consisting of a male and a female living as husband and wife, without being legally married.
Earner	Person with income from employment or self employment.
Economic Family	Refers to two or more persons who live in the same dwelling and are related to each other by blood, marriage, or adoption. Persons living common-law are considered, for statistical purposes, to be now married, regardless of their legal status. Married children living with a parent or parents could be included in the economic family. A person living alone, or who is related to no one else in the dwelling where he/she lives, is classified as an "unattached individual".
Employed	<p>Includes all individuals who, during the reference week</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) did any work at all (i.e., work includes any work for pay or profit in the context of an employer-employee relationship, unpaid family work, and self-employment); and(b) had a job but did not work due to illness, personal or family responsibilities, vacation, bad weather, labour disputes or other reasons. <p>Individuals on layoff and those with a job which has a definite starting date are not considered as employed.</p>
Family	Refers to a husband and wife who are married or living as married (with or without children of any age who have never been married) and single parents, with one or more children of any age.
Family Income	The total of income from all sources received by members of the economic family. This consists of money income from wages and salaries, net income from self-employment, investment income, government transfer payments, pensions and miscellaneous income.
Farm	Refers to any particular holding with sales of products of \$250 or more during the previous 12 month period.

Full-year, Full-time Worker	A person who worked mostly 30 hours or more per week or who usually worked less than 30 hours, but considered him/herself to be employed full-time for 49 to 52 weeks in the reference year.
Household	Refers to a person or group of persons who occupy the same dwelling and do not have a usual place of residence elsewhere in Canada.
Labour Force	Includes all individuals in the civilian, non-institutional population, 15 years of age and over who, during the reference week in which data were collected, were employed or unemployed.
Lone Parent Families	A lone parent family is defined as a parent with his or her dependent children, either living in their own household, or sharing a household with others, such as a grandparent. Persons living in a common-law relationship are not considered to be lone parents, even if their children from a previous relationship are living with them.
Low Income Measure	There is no objective scientific basis for determining a 'poverty line'. Statistics Canada, after a long review of low-income cut-offs, has introduced a new Low Income Measure. The Low Income Measure is one half of the adjusted median family income, where adjusted indicates a consideration of family size. The "needs" of one adult in 1990 are determined as \$11,838. Each additional adult is assumed to increase the family's "needs" by 40% of the "needs" of the first adult, and each child's "needs" are assumed to be 30% of that of one adult, except in single parent families, where the first child is counted as the equivalent of another adult. A child is defined as less than 16 years of age. A table of Low Income Measures for families of different sizes is included on page 99.
Not in the Labour Force	Includes all individuals in the civilian, non-institutional population 15 years of age or over who, during the reference week, were neither employed nor unemployed.
Participation Rate	The number of individuals in the labour force, whether employed or unemployed, as a percentage of the working age population. The participation rate for a particular group (age, sex, marital status, etc.) is the number of individuals in that group who are in the labour force, expressed as a percentage of the total working age population for that group.

Self-Employed

The self-employed are those persons who own and operate a business, a farm or a professional practice. They also include in their ranks independent salespersons and some other persons (e.g., babysitters and newspaper carriers) who work independently but who do not own a business. A person who owns a business but does not operate it - an investor - is not considered to be self-employed.

Unemployed

Includes all individuals who, during the reference week were

- (a) without work, but were available for work and had actively searched for work in the past four weeks;
- (b) on layoff and were available for work and had not actively searched for work in the past four weeks; and
- (c) available for work and had a new job to start in four weeks or less, and had not actively searched for work in the past four weeks.

Table 16

Low Income Measures by Family Type, 1980 to 1990

(Based on One-half Median Adjusted Family Unit Income. Please refer to the definition of the Low Income Measure on page 97.)

Family Type	1980	1985	1990
	\$		
One adult	6,375	8,797	11,838
Two adults/ One adult, one child	8,925	12,316	16,573
Three adults	11,475	15,835	21,308
Two adults, one child/ One adult, two children	10,838	14,955	20,125
Four adults	14,025	19,353	26,044
Three adults, one child	13,388	18,474	24,860
Two adults, two children/ One adult, three children	12,750	17,594	23,676
Five adults	16,575	22,872	30,779
Four adults, one child	15,938	21,993	29,595
Three adults, two children	15,300	21,113	28,411
Two adults, three children/ One adult, four children	14,663	20,233	27,227
Six adults	19,125	26,391	35,514
Five adults, one child	18,488	25,511	34,330
Four adults, two children	17,850	24,632	33,146
Three adults, three children	17,213	23,752	31,963
Two adults, four children/ One adult, five children	16,575	22,872	30,779

Table 17

The Real Value of the Low Income Measure in 1990 Dollars

One Adult	1980	1985	1990
Current Dollars	6,375	8,797	11,838
1990 Dollars	10,843	10,707	11,838

Appendix C - Subcommittee on Demographic Trends and Family Issues

The Subcommittee on Demographic Trends and Family Issues is a Subcommittee of the Interdepartmental Committee on Family Policy.

Terms of Reference

The purpose of the Subcommittee on Demographic Trends and Family Issues is to assist and advise the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families on:

- the information needs of departments regarding families
- the priority areas to be addressed
- sources of information and options for gathering new information
- approaches to the development and delivery of information to departments
- approaches to reviewing the results of data produced and assessing implications for family policy

Membership

Rob Beitting, Alberta Bureau of Statistics
Dr. Gail Babcock, Alberta Advanced Education
John McDermott, Alberta Family and Social Services
Stephen Tkachyk, Alberta Treasury
Ann MacKay-Drobot, Alberta Women's Secretariat
Kevin Taft, Alberta Ministry Responsible for Seniors
Dr. Bill Wong, Career Development and Employment
Svetlana Vernik, Economic Development and Trade
Terry Keyko, Multicultural Commission

Chairperson

Sally Huemmert

Consultant

Sherry Thompson

